

health club management

MAY 2014

No 213

ON THE COVER

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of Nuffield Health Wellbeing
on tying up with Tesco

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23 and a half hours



Can you limit your sitting and sleeping to 23 and a half hours a day?

That's the thought-provoking question asked by Dr Mike Evans in a fantastic short film which everyone in the sector should watch (see www.healthclub.co.uk/film). In less than 10 minutes he makes a compelling case for exercise, setting out the

extensive health benefits but also, crucially, making these seem achievable. All we need to do is limit our inactivity to 23 and a half hours a day, or 23 hours for children.

It's a simple challenge, but a very timely one given last month's report by the All-Party Commission on Physical Activity, which made several recommendations on addressing inactivity levels in the UK. These

Although there needs to be an element of the 'why' in our public-facing messages, the focus should be just as much on the 'how'

include the creation of a cross-sector and cross-departmental National Action Plan supported by the leaders of all three major political parties; the implementation of a public health campaign focused on the benefits of physical activity; and a drive to establish physical activity as a lifelong habit by providing early access to positive experiences in sport and active play.

The need for kids to be active has since been picked up by a coalition of multi-sector organisations – including British Heart Foundation, Nike, Lawn Tennis Association, Sustrans, Premier League and The Young

Foundation – which have jointly created MOVE1, a movement promoting an hour's daily activity for kids, backed up by an online community that offers parents tips on how to integrate this into everyday lives.

But while the idea of developing a national plan to tackle the physical inactivity pandemic is to be welcomed, as unactive CEO David Stalker commented: "We must be cautious that the youth demographic isn't seen as the main driver in overturning what is a societal problem that needs to be addressed holistically."

As Liz Terry observed in the last month's *Health Club Management*, we must continue to set our sights high when it comes to getting the whole UK population active (see *HCM* April 14, p3). We should be looking beyond MOVE1's 'hour a day' ambition for kids only, pushing instead for daily movement across the whole of society, as Evans suggests in his film.

But will actioning the Commission's recommendations bring this about? I'd question whether public health campaigns focused exclusively on the benefits of activity actually work. Ask the average person in the street and they already know exercise is good for their health – they just don't do it. Show them health-related research findings and sadly, for most, these are too intangible to motivate them to get moving (see *HCM* Feb 14, p32).

I'm starting to wonder if – although there must be an element of the 'why' in our public-facing messages – the focus should be as much on the 'how'. How can people squeeze activity into their time- and cash-strapped days? That's the key: making daily activity seem easily and enjoyably achievable. And it starts with a simple question: can you limit your sitting and sleeping to just 23 and a half hours a day?

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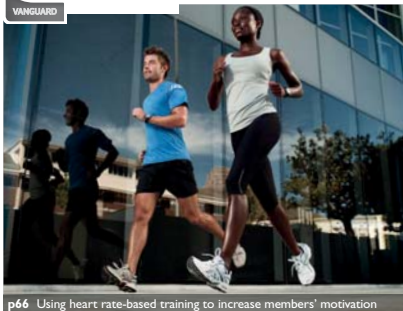
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For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to p87



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Transport and urban planning must play a part in getting people active

Physical activity begins with 'walkable' cities

You were spot on with your 'Creating wellness cities' editorial in the March issue (see *HCM* March 14, p5).

Our industry has discussed for years the concept of 'the club with no walls' as a means of extending our market reach, and if we can help drive wellness concepts such as this – the wellness city – it's sure to create a win-win.

When you look at the markets in America with the highest health club membership penetration rates, they tend to be areas that also have high degrees of walkability – places like Boston, New York City and Colorado.

Recently, the Parliamentary Commission on Physical Activity announced: "It was clear from the evidence shared that at the heart of improving levels of physical activity through transport and urban planning is grassroots engagement with

children, parents and communities to create safe environments which enable people to get active."

In addition, study after study has proven, ironically, that 'low level of fitness' is one of the main barriers affecting people's decision to join a health club or leisure centre.

The evidence is there: our ability to grow as an industry will ultimately be dependent on our ability to help promote and provide the benefits of physical activity outside our own four walls, helping the 'not yet converted' to get fit. As the old saying goes: 'If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, then Muhammad must go to the mountain.'

Doug Werner

Vice president, Healthtrax Fitness and Wellness, US, and author of *Abbie Gets Fit*

Functional training has to be 'sold' to members

I was interested to read your feature about the functional trend (see *HCM* March 14, p60), as I agree with comments from Rory McGown, founder of GYMetrix, that "functional training has to be actively sold to gym-goers".

The success of functional training, in terms of attracting and retaining members, is reliant on instructor buy-in. Operators can mistakenly see functional training as a way of introducing something new without the need for significant investment. While the kit is relatively low in cost, savings should be redirected to instructor training.

Without the support of an education package, a piece of functional kit is foreign to most and will not be used to full effect or user benefit. It's the programming created by a quality instructor that brings the product to life.

Operators must avoid viewing functional training as a low-cost option and must recognise the opportunity to invest in staff development and deliver exciting, individual and limitless new programmes for users. This will increase engagement, retention and achievement for the clients – and with it produce greater ROI.

Matt Gleed

Education & sales manager, TRX UK



Functional training requires investment in gym staff training

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CIMSPA team in place to implement transformation

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) has appointed a transitional management team to restructure the organisation in line with the business plan approved by members in November.

The team is charged with delivering the radical business plan to position the institute as the strategic lead for professional development. It is comprised of interim COO Tara Dillon – from IQL UK – supported by Spencer Moore and Ben Gittus, from Amateur Swimming Association and SkillsActive respectively. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=B7v5n>



Swimming participation is up across Dundee

Dundee aquatic facility spurs city-wide swimming

The number of people in Dundee taking part in swimming has jumped 17.5 per cent, with the boom being attributed to the city's £31m Olympia development.

The swimming centre opened in June 2013 and has been an instant hit. City figures show that, between April and December, an average of more than three swimming trips were taken per resident.

The jump in numbers highlights the health benefits investments in single facilities can have on a wider city. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m7k9f>

Correlation in activity levels between mums and kids

The more active a mother is, the more active her child is likely to be, according to new research published in *Pediatrics*.

Researchers from Cambridge and Southampton worked together to observe the patterns of 554 mothers and four-year-olds over a period of seven days.

Experts used heart rate monitors and an accelerometer to measure levels of physical activity, with the results showing a direct, positive association between physical activity in children and their mothers. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z8q4D>

payasUgym attracts VC funding

Online gym pass provider payasUgym has announced a £1.6m raft of venture capital funding as it seeks to continue growth across the UK market.

The investment, led by Albion Ventures and MMC Ventures with additional support from existing investors, brings total investment in the company to date to £3.5m.

The funding will be used to strengthen payasUgym's position in the UK market and to launch new products and services – including a new tool enabling customers to compare and directly book fitness classes all over the UK.

Partnering with well-known brands such as Virgin Active, Pure Gym, énergie and Hilton Livingwell, the payasUgym.com website now provides consumers with access to one in three of all UK health clubs and gyms.



payasUgym co-founders Jamie Ward (left) and Neil Harmsworth

"We've built a strong and dedicated network of angel investors who have loyally supported us so far, and now we're entering a new stage that requires 'next-level' investors," says payasUgym CEO Jamie Ward, who founded the company in 2010 with Neil Harmsworth. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=b4H7G>

Obesity doc: Hurt feelings must be ignored

A leading leisure industry medical advisor has said doctors need to ditch concerns about hurting obese patients' feelings and be more proactive in prescribing exercise and weight management programmes.

Dr Davina Deniszczyk, GP and medical director of wellbeing for Nuffield Health, was commenting on a new report that found as many as six million overweight UK citizens could be at risk of life-threatening illnesses as they're unaware of the extent of their obesity.

The research from Nuffield Health – the UK's largest healthcare charity – found nearly half of clinically obese patients (44 per cent) have no concerns that they are at risk of serious illness or premature death due to their weight.



The study of 3,126 adults highlighted ignorance of obesity health risks

"As healthcare professionals, we need to prioritise the health of our patients over the risk of 'hurt feelings' caused by a frank and open conversation about their weight," says Dr Deniszczyk, adding that such talks aren't currently taking place. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=tzj8j>

Derelict bowling alley to become £6m hotel and gym

Work has begun on a new £6m hotel and gym facility in Harrogate town centre. Pure Gym and Travelodge will occupy the mixed-use development, occupying a 70-bedroom hotel and a 16,900sq ft gym facility respectively.

Leeds-based Gregory Property Group

bought the former bowling alley in 2011 and secured planning approval to redevelop the site in February 2013. It had already secured a 25-year lease with Travelodge and had agreed a 15-year lease with Pure Gym for the fitness facility. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=tzj8j>

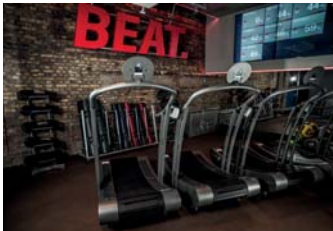
Fitness First opens microgym

Fitness First has taken its first step into the UK microgym market by opening BEAT – its new heart rate training club in London's Charing Cross.

The club was previously hinted at by Fitness First CEO Andrew Cosslett in an interview for the March 2014 edition of *Health Club Management*, and follows the successful launch in Sydney, Australia, of The Zone – a group exercise-only concept.

BEAT forms part of Fitness First's £270m brand makeover, centred around behavioural psychology and what motivates us to stay fit.

"Psychology tells us that, for people to get most out of their fitness, they need to see progress, feel they're socially connected and get variety in a positive environment," says Lee Matthews, head of fitness at Fitness First. "Heart rate training in teams led by experts



The new club runs 14 sessions a day with a choice of five class types

generates a highly motivating workout that makes every minute count on the gym floor."

The five classes available range from the beginner 'Move Better' class, intended to take groups up to 65 per cent of their heart rate, right through to 90 per cent 'HiIT Pro' classes, designed to push advanced individuals to their limits. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K4X4h>

ukactive: The national activity watchdog?

ukactive CEO David Stalker has outlined his organisation's credentials to serve as independent watchdog for the national physical activity plan suggested in a report from the All-Party Commission on Physical Activity (see also p3).

The report – launched by a cross-party group of politicians including Tanni Grey-Thompson – sets out clear recommendations to tackle the growing physical inactivity epidemic in the UK.

It calls for a National Plan of Action to tackle declining levels of physical activity, backed by all sectors and parties.

It also recommends establishing an independent body to have oversight and ensure accountability for the plan, and Stalker believes ukactive – which highlighted the extent of the inactivity crisis in its recent high-profile *Turning the Tide of Inactivity* report (see p32) – would be a suitable candidate.

"ukactive is uniquely positioned to be a



Stalker: ukactive is 'uniquely positioned' to effectively manage the evaluation of a national plan

delivery partner and manage the evaluation of a national plan, so we're open to discussions," says Stalker. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T6n3S>

LA fitness creditors approve club sell-off proposals

LA fitness has secured approval from the largest majority of creditors for its company voluntary arrangements (CVAs), which include the proposed sale of 33 of its UK clubs.

The plans, which were initiated on 6 March 2014, received strong support from landlords

– the largest group of unconnected creditors – with 90 per cent voting in favour of the terms.

The CVAs revise lease terms at several clubs, paving the way for a restructuring plan to refocus LA fitness on a smaller portfolio of 47 clubs. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P7V9C>

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Gyms must convey a social purpose

A new report from Oxygen Consulting has said that the physical activity sector must “unleash” its social purpose to thrive among the wave of private and budget gyms.

The report – supported by Matrix, The Gym Group and ukactive – says that health and fitness clubs must take cues from social purpose-led brands such as Innocent, Tom's Shoes and Apple if they want to thrive in the future.

The Fitness Sector Social Good Report details the critical impact of social responsibility on the growth, value and impact of the private gym sector over the next 15 years, against a backdrop of local authority-run leisure facilities and the rise of low-cost gyms.

The report also identifies the possible reason for the gradual decline in public perception of gyms across the country: the takeover of these



The report urges gyms to change perceptions through social purpose

chains by bigger businesses and venture capital funds, which then led to a more ruthless focus on the ‘bottom line’ mentality for those aiming to capitalise on the sector during the 80s and 90s. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C7k3f>*

Please see page 46 for an in-depth feature on The Fitness Sector Social Good Report.

Survey highlights wearable tech trends

The digital revolution may well be upon us, but health and fitness consumers buying wearable technology still prefer to make their purchase in-store than from the company's website, according to new research from Nielsen.

Results from the February Nielsen Health and Wellness survey of 471 American consumers were combined with findings from the firm's Connected Life Report to paint a picture of the current relationship between consumers and wearable tech.

The report confirmed the rise of wearable technology, with smartphone apps proving particularly popular for keeping track of wellbeing. In January 2014, 45.8 million US smartphone owners used a health and fitness app – an 18 per cent increase from 39 million users during January 2013.

But while the product market is becoming increasingly technology-focused, traditional methods for purchasing and decision-making remain surprisingly popular: 37 per cent of



Wearable health check: Around two-thirds of fitness band owners say they use their device daily

fitness bands sold were bought by consumers in-store, compared with 33 per cent online from the brand's website, with Nielsen noting: “Manufacturers of fitness bands should take note of the sway that a hands-on experience can provide.” *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Q6n6D>*

DC Leisure announces rebrand as ‘Places for People’

Leisure operator and developer DC Leisure has rebranded as a social enterprise called Places for People after being acquired by the property management and development group in 2012.

DC's merger with not-for-dividend Places for People marks the first time a leisure

provider has joined forces with a housing provider. The outfit says its core mission is to create active places and healthy people. Places for People Leisure Management will be the industry-facing brand, replacing DC Leisure Management. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=T5A4D>*

“
Installing
Legend...



New initiative to train 50,000 'sport leaders'

A new community sport initiative will look to train up 50,000 young people as sport leaders as part of efforts to increase the number of young people who take part in physical activity. The scheme will be run as a partnership between Asda Community Life, Sports Leaders UK, ukactive and Spirit of 2012 Trust.

Young people taking part in the initiative will be offered Sports Leaders UK courses and qualifications. The aim is to increase the number of sports leaders' volunteering hours from 640,000 to 1 million.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a5y9w>



The Clubbercise concept is due to launch in Exercise4Less and Winners 2000 clubs this month

Rave-inspired dance class concept goes nationwide

A new rave-inspired dance fitness brand, which sees participants workout with glow sticks, has launched throughout the UK.

Clubbercise – the brainchild of former nightclub podium dancer Claire Green – is led by qualified instructors who put classes through their paces in a darkened room with disco lighting and a soundtrack of songs from 90s to recent club anthems.

Instructor training courses have taken place in London and Leeds, with classes underway in Birmingham, Doncaster, and Oxford. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=y8R5y>*

£500,000 redevelopment underway at Green Bank

Work has started on a £500,000 redevelopment at Green Bank Leisure Centre in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire.

The improvements will see a new, 30-station cycling studio being added, while the gym, sauna and changing areas will be renovated over the next six months.

The redevelopment of the community leisure centre – operated by Active Nation on behalf of South Derbyshire District Council (SDDC) – is being funded by Sport England, SDDC and Active Nation. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f8w9g>*

Exercise can stave off dementia

A series of recent studies have added credence to the notion that physical activity is far more effective than mental exercises such as crosswords in staving off dementia.

It's been a long-held belief that keeping the mind active is the best way to fight cognitive decline – with a series of recent 'brain training' computer games cashing in on the notion – but researchers say that money would be better spent in the gym, where results can be instant.

A notable study from the University of Pittsburgh, in the US, showed the immediate positive effect brisk outdoor walks had on the brains of middle-aged and elderly men and women, compared to those who were inactive. Focusing on those aged 55 to 80, researchers found that the regular workouts increased the size of the hippocampus – the



Regular exercise can knock almost two years off your brain's 'age'

brain's memory hub – knocking almost two years off its biological age. Whereas the brain usually shrinks with age by around one per cent per year, the brains of the men and women who exercised by walking for 40 minutes three times a week expanded by up to two per cent. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V9n6c>*

£19m Everyone Active Acton centre opens

Ealing Council's £19m redevelopment of Acton Town Hall in west London is complete, with the new leisure centre opened at the end of April after 22 months of construction.

The comprehensive redesign – drawn up by S&P Architects and carried out by Willmott Dixon – has resulted in the addition of a 100-station gym, eight-lane 25m swimming pool, 12m training pool with movable floor, two dance studios, multi-purpose rooms and a library.

The gym has been kitted out with the Precor Experience Series range – including treadmills, upright and recumbent bikes and cross-trainers – alongside Concept2 rowers. There's also Precor Vitality Series strength equipment, Wattbikes, Power Plate machines and Trixter bikes, as well as a new dedicated functional training area with an X Cube and Total Gym equipment for small group GRABITY training.

"Huge amounts of work have gone into this project, which will bring first-class sport and leisure facilities to the borough and give



Everyone Active will operate the newly redeveloped centre on behalf of Ealing Council

local people all the amenities they need to achieve their health and fitness goals," says Duncan Jefford, south east regional director at Everyone Active, which will operate the facility on behalf of Ealing Council. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F9W5p>*

The Gym Group rockets up the profit charts

The Gym Group has taken 16th place in a *Sunday Times* financial league table ranking companies according to growth in profits over the last three years.

It's the only operator in the list from the health and fitness sector, reinforcing the notion

that the budget end of the health club market is best-placed for growth. The Gym Group has grown its profits by an annual average of 91 per cent over the last three years. Profits topped £3.7m in 2013 alone, on sales of £22.6m. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=O8u5h>*

Healthhaus harbours high hopes

A new high-end health club in Jersey is hoping to attract the island's many corporate employees and its ageing population, with a 360-degree approach to wellness.

Healthhaus, a 1,009sq m (10,860sq ft) centre attached to the island's Hotel de France and ayurvedic-themed spa, is the brainchild of Glenda Rivoallan, who is operating the facility on a 10-year lease.

On joining the £100-a-month club, which opened for business on 24 March, members are given a one-to-one screening by resident chiropractor Dr Sam Jackson, who examines respiratory function, cardio capacity, blood pressure and cholesterol and conducts a movement analysis.

Members are then given a tailored workout plan, while anyone found to have serious health concerns receives a fast-track referral, either



The gym offers weekly educational clinics covering training principles

to their own GP or Jersey's only consultant cardiologist Dr Andrew Mitchell.

The workout space of the 900-capacity club is centred around two milon strength endurance circuits, which offer HIIT-influenced 35-minute workout sessions.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=d6d4N>

Doncaster's Eco Fitness lands rugby star

Doncaster health club Eco Fitness has added some star power to its training staff with the addition of rugby league player Jon Goddard.

Goddard, who plied his trade for Hull KR, Castleford and Halifax before turning down a contract with Doncaster last winter to become a fitness instructor, delivers a number of uncompromising personal training sessions in addition to specialist Beach Bodies and Ultimate Abs classes.

He first learned of Eco Fitness last winter, when he started attending managing director Simon Dinnie's outdoor functional fitness classes, soon taking a shine to the operation.

"Jon's a top-class PT and he puts a lot more thought into his sessions than your typical



Eco Fitness MD Simon Dinnie (left) and his latest signing Jon Goddard

trainer," Dinnie told *Health Club Management*.

Goddard, 31, began holding sessions at the club in late January, before recently expanding his involvement and agreeing to help drive the fledgling club's 2014 expansion through more diverse classes. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U4J5X>*

Watford girls' grammar school upgrades gym gear

FullerLife Health & Fitness Centre, a community club run by Watford Grammar School for Girls, has been refurbished with a range of equipment from SportsArt Fitness.

The FullerLife club is designed to provide a non-intimidating, friendly environment for

school pupils and parents to train, featuring a fully-equipped gym, aerobics studio, swimming pool and sports hall.

SportsArt oversaw the work by providing design and gym layout options and suggesting gym equipment. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P5c3T>*

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turning the
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Manchester City teams up with TRX

English Premier League title contender Manchester City Football Club (MCFC) is hoping a new tie-up with fitness equipment supplier TRX can give it the edge in its quest to secure a second league crown in three seasons.

The deal sees the club continuing to use TRX equipment in club fitness regimes, which will now be bolstered with the introduction of tailored TRX training programmes.

Designed to sustain health, on-pitch performance and elite fitness levels, the TRX programmes will be adopted by City's first team and academy.

Stars such as Pablo Zabaleta, James Milner, Fernandinho and Alvaro Negredo will work out using a range of TRX equipment, combined with personalised TRX training programmes, as part of their daily routine to improve



Manchester City hopes the new deal will give it a competitive edge

endurance, strength, flexibility and balance.

As part of the partnership, TRX will collaborate with MCFC on a series of strength and conditioning publication pieces, while players will feature in a TRX promotional video alongside digital campaigns.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M4Z9f>

Premier and Pure Gym offer graduate jobs

Premier Training International has teamed up with Pure Gym to provide its graduates with guaranteed employment, giving students a definitive pathway into the working world.

The Pure Premier Diploma in Fitness Instructing and Personal Training package gives graduates the opportunity to become a freelance personal trainer with Pure Gym – the UK low-cost fitness chain currently in the process of merging with The Gym Group – giving them the opportunity to build their personal training client base and gain hands-on experience in the sector.

The package includes a Premier Diploma in Personal Training, one-day studio cycling course and an online total pad-work course.

There's a full-time and part-time option for completing the course – full-time lasts up to six weeks while part-time is 16 weeks.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for people wanting to enter the industry, as it enables them to follow a specific employment pathway



The training package allows graduates to become a freelance personal trainer with Pure Gym

straight into work with Pure Gym," says Paul Dorkings, sales director at Premier.

"We're delighted to work with Pure Gym and really looking forward to watching our graduates grow into exceptional fitness professionals." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m5f6m>*

Leisure-net Solutions announces Monkhouse merger

Leisure-net Solutions (LNS) and David Monkhouse Consulting have merged as of 1 April under the LNS banner, having found synergy between the two leisure consultancies while working together on recent projects.

The companies have teamed up for work

on Quest, the ukactive Code of Practice, Flame, BEE – the peer-to-peer and online customer experience training service – and Active-net 2014, the new active leisure sector one-to-one networking event.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V7p8g>

Leak offers possible insight into Apple's health app

Leaked information has revealed potential details of Apple's health and fitness application, Healthbook, which could be able to record an array of information to monitor the state of the human body.

Details suggest Healthbook will record activity levels, nutritional information, weight and sleep patterns, as well as vitals, blood sugar levels, respiratory rate and oxygen saturation. One detail that remains a mystery is how all the data will be collected, with certain stats unobtainable by devices such as the iPhone.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m7z7n>



Members work up a worthwhile sweat, as their workouts provide power for the leisure centre

Tiddenfoot goes green with Technogym system

Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre in Bedfordshire has become the first local authority site to install an eco-friendly line of equipment that harnesses human energy and feeds it directly into the facility's power grid.

As part of a £2m refurbishment, the Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)-operated site has opted for Technogym's ARTIS Line with its Renew energy harvesting technology. The council is investing £6m across its entire leisure provision, which includes six leisure centres.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F9B4C>

Bannatyne's pumps £850k into north-east clubs

Bannatyne Fitness has invested £850,000 into four of its north-east health clubs as part of a major upgrade to workout equipment. The investment comes after The Bannatyne Group recently announced a £92m deal with M&G Investments for the sale and leaseback of the ground leases for 39 Bannatyne clubs.

The company has turned to Technogym to replace CV machines at Coulby Newham in Middlesbrough, Ingleby Barwick in Stockton, plus Darlington and Durham. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z8q4D>*

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Premier Training teams up with Talwalkars in India

Premier Training International (PTI) has embarked on an international partnership with Talwalkars – one of India's largest health club chains – to provide ongoing education, training and development to over 180 of its PTs and fitness professionals.

Launched last month, the education pathway scheme includes kinesiology, anatomy and physiology, as well as customer service. PTI will deliver leadership and management training to over 40 of Talwalkars' senior managers, as well as a five-day Advanced Fitness Skills course to 140 of its fitness trainers.

The courses will be part of a larger education pathway that has the end goal of UK Level 3 accreditation, REPS membership and an overseas internship. The objective is to enhance employee performance levels in a bid to propel the Indian health and fitness sector closer to the standards of the international market.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x7D3a>

Speedflex opens first overseas facility in Dubai

Following its launch in the UK last year, circuit-based training concept Speedflex has announced the opening of its first overseas site, in Dubai.

UAE-based hospitality firm JA Resorts & Hotels will be opening the facility in its JA Ocean View Hotel this month.

Tapping into the growing trend of HIIT training and group exercise, each 45-minute, instructor-led circuit features seven Speedflex machines that automatically respond to, and create resistance levels based on, the individual's force.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=msa8g>

Vivafit: Indonesian master franchise agreement

Vivafit, the franchisor of women-only express gyms, has signed a master franchise agreement for Indonesia.

Franchisee CNI is a manufacturer and distributor of nutritional supplements, food, cosmetics, cooking utensils and cleaning products, and also operates in India, the Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei and Taiwan.

The company is said to be planning a large expansion of the Vivafit network across Indonesia, with the stated intention of opening hundreds of clubs.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=H2Q5V>

Life1 Club launches in Hungary

A new fitness brand, Life1 Club, opened in the Hungarian city of Pecs – the country's fifth largest city – in February.

Owned by a group of companies – including Fitness Vision Hungary – the 1,200sq m club caters exclusively for women. With membership costing €20-30 a month, the club aims to offer a welcoming, modern,

high quality environment for its clients at an affordable price.

There's a big emphasis in the club on ensuring that female members feel comfortable in their workout space. Equipment is strategically positioned in the gym so members don't feel exposed while they work out.

The gym has been equipped by Star Trac, including E Series cardio, Inspiration strength, Impact strength, Max Rack, Smith machine, upright and recumbent bikes and 21 Spinner bikes. Alongside the gym space are two group exercise studios: one for group cycling and the other for activities such as aerobics.

Fitness Vision Hungary has plans to open a further two clubs in 2014. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=ej5M>*



Equipment has been laid out so its female members don't feel exposed

Eurobarometer reveals falling participation

In 2013, 74 per cent of EU citizens were not members of any type of sport or exercise club, according to the latest Eurobarometer report – a rise from 67 per cent in 2009.

Sweden has the highest penetration rate for health and fitness clubs – 33 per cent – with Denmark in second place at 25 per cent. Lithuania and Bulgaria were at the bottom of the table with 1 per cent and 2 per cent respectively.

One significant change from 2009 to 2013 was in the engagement levels of younger women particularly, who are less active than men. High levels of inactivity also exist among those aged over 55. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=O6n2n>*



More needs to be done to engage younger women

Growth of corporate wellness in the US

Corporate employers in the US that invest in wellness intend to spend an average of US\$594 per employee on wellness incentives within their healthcare programmes for 2014, according to new research from the National Business Group on Health.

The survey is the latest in a series dating back to 2009, which analyse the growth of corporate health improvement programmes. The latest figures represent an increase of 15 per cent on 2013's average of US\$521, and are more than double the average of US\$260 reported five years ago. The largest increase was among companies with fewer than 5,000 employees,

where the per employee average climbed to US\$595, one-third higher than in 2013.

The most popular wellness programmes are focused on lifestyle management, incorporating physical activity, weight management and stress management.

The survey also found that 95 per cent of US companies plan to offer some kind of health improvement programme for their employees, with the percentage of companies offering incentives to participate in these initiatives increasing from 57 per cent in 2009 to 74 per cent in 2014.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U2V5P>

Youth appeal for MacVienna



The club includes a CrossFit-style zone, targeting students and said to be the first such facility in the area

MacVienna Fitness in Brunswick, Germany, opened its doors at the end of February.

The brand new club, formerly a factory that produced F1 racing helmets, is an independent site owned by Christian Härtle, who also runs premium club Hygia Fitness in Brunswick. It's situated in the city centre, next to the university, and covers 1,750sq m. There's an extensive gym floor with Precor strength, cardio and free weight equipment, complemented by a Life Fitness circuit for female members only.

Group exercise is also on offer, with different levels of package available – from €14.90 a month for students, up to €19.90 a month on a month-by-month basis for gym, classes and sauna/shower access. Those willing to trade up

to €26.90 also get their drinks included. The ethos is that you don't have to be the cheapest provided you deliver good quality every day.

Complementing the gym and class offering is a CrossFit-style area, targeting students and younger people and said to be the first such facility to open in the area; in spite of the additional cost (taking membership up to €39.90 a month) demand has reportedly been very high.

This functional training space has been equipped by Escape, including an Octagon as well as kettlebells, CoreBags and Bulgarian bags, plus a full SAQ range and Pavigym flooring. The space offers group training and small group training, with the number of classes set to increase as member numbers rise.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P8V3C>

EHFA rebrands in bid to get Europe active

The European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) has rebranded under the new name EuropeActive, aligning its brand with its new goal of reaching 80 million health club members across Europe by 2025.

This change is part of a wider repositioning designed to expand the organisation's field of expertise to cover more of the fitness, physical activity and wellbeing sector and positioning EuropeActive as the independent European umbrella organisation for the sector.

In addition, EuropeActive has expressed an ambition to become an EU-level research institute, while still maintaining

its involvement with policymaking. A new membership platform will serve as a hub for knowledge exchange where members will be able to share research.

"We aim to develop a strong brand based on a membership strategy to strengthen the position of the industry and to promote the importance of the role fitness can play in health-enhancing activity," says executive director Nathalie Smeeman.

EHFA was founded in 1996 as a not-for-profit organisation to represent the interests of the European health and fitness sector at the EU level. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=4107>

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PEOPLE NEWS

Edited by Jak Phillips. Email: jakphillips@leisuremedia.com

Thompson joins Createability

Leisure design and build specialist Createability has secured health, fitness and leisure industry veteran Brian Thompson to operate as its new sales director.

Thompson, whose career spans more than 20 years in the sector, will be responsible for defining the company's sales strategy, taking the business into new sectors, building a sales team and ultimately increasing turnover.

Thompson began his career in 1989 as a duty manager within a local authority leisure centre, before moving into the private sector when he managed leisure at Foxhills Golf and Resort situated in Surrey.

He then spent 12 years working with Technogym in a number of roles, before moving to the international division of Matrix, overseeing distributors across Eastern Europe, Turkey and South Africa. During this time, Thompson helped both companies achieve notable growth over a short time period, and



Thompson: Hoping to drive growth for Createability

he now hopes to replicate this success for Createability. "I believe I can add value and help the business grow further, and am looking forward to rolling my sleeves up and getting stuck in," he says. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=V4r5t>

Reynolds for regional manager at Mosaic

Mosaic Spa & Health Clubs has appointed Mark Reynolds to serve as regional manager, covering two of the group's locations – The Shrewsbury Club and Holmer Park Health Club & Spa in Hereford – hoping to harness his 20 years of industry experience working across three continents.

Reynolds holds a BSc in Sports Science and joins from Bannatyne's, where he was general manager at one of the company's largest sites for nearly four years. Prior to that, he spent three years working for Marriott. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p2jfp>



Reynolds oversees operational and financial functions

Fusion Lifestyle adds talent to management team

Two new recruits from leisure giants David Lloyd Leisure and Virgin Active have joined London-based charity Fusion Lifestyle's business management team.

Following a strong 2013, the company has brought in Ian Cooper as regional business manager and Stephen Wren as divisional business manager to drive standards and deliver private sector know-how. This year is key for the firm, with over £20m of investment being put in to the redevelopment of facilities across Haringey and Braintree. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P8H2p>



Rebecca Knight joins from Technogym

Life Fitness eyes public sector with latest hires

Equipment supplier Life Fitness has strengthened its public sector focus through the promotion of Andy McLaughlan as public sector development manager and the appointments of Roger Eldergill and Rebecca Knight as public sector account managers for education, developing new business and supporting a wide variety of institutions. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P8a4Z>



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IHRSA 2014

This year's IHRSA Annual Convention & Trade Show was a showcase of fitness innovation and leadership. Kristen Walsh reports

Over 11,000 industry professionals from over 80 countries attended this year's IHRSA Annual Convention, which took place in San Diego, California, US on 12–15 March. With a broad offering encompassing educational and motivational seminars, group workouts, a trade show spanning 16,720sq m (180,000sq ft) with 372 companies representing all aspects of the health club industry, and networking and social events, IHRSA's 33rd Annual International Convention & Trade Show was a high-energy event that celebrated fitness industry success, product and service innovation, and the sector's commitment to increasing physical activity levels.

New product launches

The opportunity to 'kick the tyres' of a wide range of new products and service offerings is one of the many factors that makes the IHRSA trade show so appealing. Dozens of product launches took place during the two-day event.

Technogym, for example, introduced Wellness on the Go – what it refers to as a complete ecosystem. It includes: the mywellness cloud computing platform that connects consumers, operators and trainers; Unity, the company's Android 4-based console that features swipe-screen touch technology, virtual training, log-in access to personalised



Sally Hogshead kicked off the event with a high energy session

content, and a wide variety of entertainment options; the mywellness app that allows operators to stay in touch with their members inside and outside the club; the Prescribe App that's designed for trainers; and the Artis and Excite equipment ranges.

Precor also announced a new innovation – an update to its Preva networked fitness system which now features Video On Demand, a menu of curated music and entertainment content. Users can select a genre-specific music

video type, a workout intensity level, and a 30- or 45-minute time period, with the system then providing a constant stream of their chosen entertainment that lasts for the duration of their workout.

Cybox International unveiled its new 12-piece Eagle selectorised strength line that provides improved biomechanics and a modern aesthetic. The Eagle's patented Dual Axis technology allows users to train in either predetermined or user-defined patterns of motion. Independent arm motion encourages symmetrical strength and development, while converging and diverging movements afford natural movement.

TRX celebrated its 10th year in business by introducing its TRX CORE membership programme, a package of products and services for TRX-certified trainers that's designed to help them build their businesses.

World-class speakers

Each day of IHRSA 2014 offered an inspiring keynote presentation. Sally Hogshead kicked off the convention with a high-energy session. In her presentation entitled 'How to Fascinate: From First Impressions to Lasting Value', she pointed out that, in this highly distracted world, we have a mere nine seconds to fascinate others and connect with them. With humour, flair and research to back up her assertions, Hogshead also pointed out that it's important to know the kind of personality



IHRSA 2014 presented a broad range of educational and motivational sessions, which were well attended



Gary Vaynerchuk stressed that if clubs didn't embrace social media, they'd quickly get left behind

'archetype' we have, and how it draws others to us and makes us irreplaceable.

Best-selling author Dan Heath gave some sage advice about decision-making in his talk, 'Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work'. He said we often fall into a number of predictable traps, and that the best way to avoid them is to devise a better decision-making process, which may involve asking what advice we would give our best friend. "Then, once you've made your decision, mark it on your calendar and review it in six months."

In his presentation, 'The Thank You Economy', social media maven Gary Vaynerchuk emphasised how social media provides valuable word-of-mouth advertising and marketing for club brands; if clubs don't embrace it, they'll be quickly left behind as they won't be able to attract younger members.

And Luke Williams gave attendees plenty to think about when – in his keynote talk, 'Disrupt: Sparking Business Transformation with Innovation' – he spoke about how the fitness industry is ripe for disruption.

Educational seminars

Convention attendees also benefited from the many ideas and best practices offered at the educational sessions, workshops and special presentations. "There were so many great ideas for sales commissions, campaign ideas, new types of trial memberships, new ideas on leadership, as well as new ways of marketing,"

says Anna Rounaja, owner of Liikuntakeskus Hukka in Oulu, Finland. "I will definitely be attending again next year."

Audio (MP3) and video recordings from dozens of IHRSA 2014 sessions are available for purchase at www.ihrsa.org/store. Titles include '8 Critical Steps to Selling Memberships' with Justin Tamsett; 'How the Health Club Industry Can Save the Affordable Care Act' with Walter Bortz; and 'Driving Membership Sales & Retention by Embracing Mobile Technology & Trends' with Bryan O'Rourke, to name a few.

During the 18th Annual IHRSA Financial Panel, moderator Rick Caro, president of New York-based consultancy Management Vision, gave his signature financial headlines, pointing out that, while same-store sales and net memberships rose slightly in 2013, non-dues revenues were flat. EBITDA margins (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation), which have increased slightly from 2009–2011, have not yet achieved the levels they reached in 2006–2007.

Meanwhile David Logan, co-founder and senior partner at Los Angeles consulting firm CultureSync, gave a presentation on Tribal Leadership for the Global Leadership Summit, based on his book by the same name.

Logan defines a tribe as a group of between 20 and 150 people. Noting that the quality of our tribes determines how much work gets done, he said that 75 per cent of tribes in the work setting are dysfunctional.

He identified five stages of tribes:

- Stage 1:** Life Sucks
- Stage 2:** My Life Sucks
- Stage 3:** I'm Great
- Stage 4:** We're Great
- Stage 5:** Life's Great

Twenty-six per cent of tribes are stuck in the first two stages, he said, with 49 per cent in stage three, 24 per cent in stage four, and just 2 per cent in stage five. He identified a series of steps we can take to move tribes from stage

GET INTO GET ACTIVE

IHRSA rolled out its Why Get Active campaign in San Diego to show the great work clubs are doing in their communities to help more people make exercise part of their daily lives. Thousands of attendees used the hashtag #WhyGetActive on social media to share why they exercise.

Additional campaign resources and promotions will be released to IHRSA members soon. Let the world know why you get active by posting your comments to social media with #whygetactive. Feel free to send a photo of yourself explaining why you get active to ab@ihrsa.org, or upload it to the IHRSA Flickr page, in the #Whygetactive set, where you can see others from IHRSA 2014.

Dozens of new product launches for the health and fitness sector took place during the two-day trade show

► four to five, including:

- Find every person's values, using a range of open-ended questions.
- Speak in terms of shared values, as when George Washington said: "We all want freedom and independence."
- Build triads: three-person relationships where each individual is responsible for the quality of the relationship between the other two.

Logan commented that Phil Jackson, legendary former coach of the Chicago Bulls, attributed the team's consecutive championship wins to their journey from thinking "I'm great" to thinking "we're great".

The same day, Debra Siena, president of Midtown Health Club, and Amy Morin, a psychotherapist, hosted the fifth Annual Women's Leadership Summit. Its theme was '13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do', based on a list created by Morin which went viral after being shared on Forbes.com.

"Having good habits is not always enough," Morin told those in attendance at the summit. "You need to look at how your bad habits hold you back. Once you're aware of your bad habits, you need to make a plan (to change them), and put it on paper and figure out how to implement it. You have to commit to it every day and be patient with yourself."

Recognising successes

Three industry leaders were recognised during IHRSA 2014 for their commitment to serving the industry, and their local communities.

The Outstanding Community Service Award was presented to Kim Austin Kenyon and her team at Gold's Gym Dutchess County. The reach of Gold's Gym Dutchess County extends far beyond the walls of the two clubs, touching the lives of people in the community as a regular supporter of organisations like the American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association and The Renegades' Pitch for Kids – a local foundation that focuses on strengthening children and families.

The Julie Main Scholarship was presented to Patsy McLean of Canada's Adelaide Club. Like Julie Main, Patsy also faced the adversity of a cancer diagnosis. Now a melanoma survivor, she launched a Cancer Specific Exercise programme at the Adelaide Club, and leads wellness seminars where she shares her message that life's challenges can be overcome through healthy living. In all aspects



of her work, her warm, caring and motivating approach is helping more people to get active and live healthier, happier lives.

The Associate Member of the Year Award was presented to ABC Financial. An IHRSA member since 1986, ABC Financial was selected for its decades of outstanding achievement, innovation and support of the health and fitness industry, its continued investment in leading-edge technology, marketing programmes and software solutions, and its unwavering support of IHRSA and its members.

For the ninth consecutive year, IHRSA proudly hosted The BASH for Augie's Quest, an aggressive cure-driven ALS research initiative established by fitness industry pioneer Augie Nieto. The highlight of the evening was when Nieto, who has been

fighting ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease) since 2005, displayed his strength gains by walking (with assistance) across the stage, to the delight of the over 1,000 Bash attendees. The 2014 Bash raised over US\$1.7m. Since 2006, Augie's Quest, in conjunction with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), has raised over US\$41m. ●

LOOKING AHEAD

Plans are already well underway for IHRSA 2015, to be held on 11–14 March 2015 in Los Angeles, California, US. Speaker applications are being accepted until 31 May at www.ihrsa.org/speaker-application

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Health reforms – the full year report



Health and wellbeing boards: a critical part of the health

reforms, but how are they faring one year on?

David Stalker reports

Health and wellbeing boards (HWB) are approaching their first anniversary following reforms introduced by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the biggest shake-up to the health system in decades.

An abundance of new structures, tiers and bodies were introduced at the same time as the scrapping of many others. Each top tier and unitary authority has its own board, with members collaborating to understand their local community's needs, agreeing priorities and encouraging commissioners to work in a more joined-up way.

Despite concerns about some of the reforms, HWBs were seen as a positive addition – a means by which those working in health and social care can come together and provide united thought on how to improve local outcomes. Although they have faced criticism from some quarters, one year on it seems the general view is still a positive one, but HWBs need to live up to their potential and deliver effective change based on local needs.

Legitimacy and flexibility

HWBs have a greater formal status than previous partnership boards and are designed to provide the flexibility needed to create strong local partnerships. Most are chaired by a senior elected member, with many vice-chairs coming from Clinical Commissioning Groups. Directors of public health represent the public health needs of the local area, with Healthwatch also linking in to champion the views of the public.

This provides strong democratic legitimacy and involvement between local authorities and the NHS, but also



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM / ARTENS

A huge shift across society is needed to re-embed physical activity into people's everyday lives

accumulates the significant experience, skills and leadership of members to try and improve local health outcomes.

The platform has been set for broader integration of physical activity services right along the care pathways, from public health to acute services. There are opportunities to be had and contracts to be won, and I urge all providers to speak to their local Healthwatch to see how they can fit in with local health delivery.

'Worthy but ineffectual'?

Parts of the press have been quick to criticise HWBs as a 'worthy cause but ineffectual', viewed as another layer of bureaucracy – talking shops with few notable outcomes.

I'm at times inclined to agree with this view: there are few signs that boards have begun to tackle the urgent problems facing their health and social care systems. However, changes will be slow as many HWBs are still delivering public health contracts inherited by the now defunct PCTs. HWBs need time to settle in to their role, ensure their structures and governance is effective, and get comfortable making the difficult choices they've been set up to make.

Their potential comes from bringing together politicians with both clinical and public health commissioners, providing a powerful platform for local leadership.

They have strategic influence over commissioning decisions, and for this reason they need to champion change, looking at different solutions and different means by which they can reduce health inequalities. Crucially for the activity sector, the integration between public health and clinical commissioning offers the opportunity to embed physical activity across the care pathway, from rehabilitation to prevention.

Proof and evidence

A year on, I strongly believe there's never been a better time for the health and leisure sector to become a cornerstone of local health delivery, but there's still some way to go to prove how our interventions can work in a real world setting.

An industrial scale shift in society is needed to re-embed physical activity into people's lives. We must develop and put evidence on the desks of the HWBs of what works, and how. When we do this, I'm confident they'll pay attention.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact Stephen Wilson, head of public affairs and policy at ukactive – stephenwilson@ukactive.org.uk

PHYSICAL COMPANY CELEBRATE 25 YEARS IN THE FITNESS INDUSTRY

Forward-thinking fitness equipment suppliers Physical Company are celebrating their 25th Anniversary this month. Sales and marketing director John Halls offers an insight into the company's progress over the last 25 years and what the future holds

As a company with a strong reputation in the industry, what would you say are the things your customers most associate with Physical Company?
Definitely our first rate customer service. A part of this service is to ensure we hold 99 per cent stock at any one time. When our customers need something quickly they know they can rely on us. In addition, our product

range is unrivalled and variety and innovation has definitely become synonymous with Physical Company.

Your product range is a mix of own brand and licensed products. What do you look for when taking on a new licensed product?

Firstly we look for genuine innovation. BOSU, which we've sold as the exclusive UK distribution partner since 2004, is the perfect example of an innovation that's still being used today. We also insist upon a good education programme. Thirdly, quality is absolutely essential and we'll always test a piece of kit to its limits before agreeing to take it on. Over the last 10 years we've brought some pretty exciting products to market in the UK. We maintain you won't find a better piece of suspension training kit than the Human Trainer, nor a piece of equipment as versatile as Total Gym.

What would you say are your greatest achievements over the last 25 years?

Creating our own range of commercial fitness equipment in 2006 was our first big step towards commercial growth. Becoming a manufacturer in our own right was a long and challenging process, but it was the right decision and we haven't looked back.

Over the last four years we've been increasing our product range to enable us to offer a complete fitness solution to major operators. We are now considered as a group-wide equipment supplier and are regularly invited to tender for multi-site contracts.

BOSU, which arrived in the UK in 2004, has become a must-have piece of equipment for all gyms

Any make or break moments?

Taking on Total Gym was a risk for us. It was a much higher value product than most of the items in our catalogue, but we could see its potential. Luckily, the risk paid off and over the last five years we've taken the Total Gym from relative obscurity in the UK to being on the gym floor of big operators like David Lloyd, Virgin Active and Everyone Active.

So what does the future hold?

The last two years have been focused on laying the foundations for the next product development cycle that will focus on function, quality and style.

Our rapidly increasing recognition as an industry-leading supplier of group fitness exercise equipment for major operators has allowed us to work towards 12 per cent growth every year for the next three years. With this rate of growth – you can certainly expect to see Physical Company in more and more multi-site operators.



GRAVITY classes on the Total Gym have become a popular choice for major operators



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MATRIX

ON YOUR BIKE

With UK inactivity regularly making the headlines, leading fitness equipment supplier, Matrix Fitness, puts its faith and finances into a two-wheeled solution

Learning to ride a bike is a rite of passage for most children; offering freedom, independence, and a variety of health benefits. It's a skill that is never lost, but regularly forgotten, as all too often an active youth gives way to a sedentary adulthood.

Research indicates that 12.5 million people in England failed to achieve 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week within a 28-day period during 2013. Sadly it's a growing trend, with experts predicting that "If trends continue, by 2030 the average British person will use only 25 per cent more energy than they would have done had they just spent the day in bed." According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), it's not just the nation's health that is suffering as a result of inactivity; it's also costing England's national economy £8.2 billion per year.

Women are the worst offenders, with figures suggesting that despite an increase in the number of women playing sport regularly, more men (23.7 per cent) take part regularly in sport than women (18.5 per cent).

Fitness equipment manufacturer, Matrix Fitness, is leading the charge to redress this imbalance; not only through

the supply of engaging fitness equipment, such as its 7xi range of products that feature a myriad of entertainment options, but also via support for grassroots activity and fitness initiatives that seek to engage the public in physical activity, and promote women in sport.

For the past five years, Matrix Fitness and its parent company, Johnson Health Tech UK (JHT), have been involved with women's cycling; both as title sponsor of a team, and instigator of a key race in the women's cycling calendar. While the team name and rider line-up has changed, Matrix' unwavering support has stood firm.

Matrix Fitness – Vulpine Team Manager, Stefan Wyman, explains the benefits of Matrix' contribution to cycling: "Matrix Fitness has become synonymous with cycling in the UK, and having spent five years as the title partner for a leading team, backing the biggest race series, and launching products that support effective indoor training for cyclists, it's easy to see why. With regards to our team, the stability provided by Matrix Fitness has put us in a unique position to be able to plan in advance and believe in our strong foundations. This structure has led to huge success, with two riders taking Olympic gold in London 2012, including



Matrix Fitness Ambassador, Dani King. Closer to home and our riders have been working with Matrix and local authorities to provide community outreach – part of an initiative to promote cycling to young people."

Alastair Grant, Commercial Director for Tour Events adds: "Britain boasts some of the world's best female cyclists, and interest from teams, spectators and the media since the inaugural women's Grand Prix event proves that there is definitely an appetite for top-class women's cycle races in the UK. Our partnership with Matrix Fitness has enabled us to provide a first-class

Matrix Fitness cycle team timeline

2009

- Matrix Fitness sponsors the Vision 1 Racing Team.
- Former Commonwealth, Olympic, and World road race champion, Nicole Cooke, headlines; providing inspiration for younger riders, like future star Dani King.

2010

- Riders from the Vision 1 Racing Team form new squad – the Horizon Fitness Racing Team; a development squad for female riders.
- Great Britain's most decorated female Paralympian, Dame Sarah Storey, joins the team.
- The Horizon Fitness Grand Prix (named after JHT's consumer brand) runs as a pilot event, prior to the male-only Halfords' Tour Series. The event showcases women's cycling in the UK, and is an opportunity for newer riders to go head-to-head against some of the UK's best women riders.

2011

- Future Olympic Champion, 5 x World Champion, & World Record holder, Joanna Rowsell signs for the team.
- Johnson Health Tech UK becomes 'Official Health & Fitness Partner' to The Tour Series, The Tour of Britain and The Tour Rides.
- Johnson Health Tech Grand Prix Series (female equivalent of Halfords' Tour Series) launches, with full TV coverage of all four stages.



Introducing the
Matrix Fitness -
Vulpine line-up
for 2014

platform for women to compete; offering a great experience for the riders and teams, while also contributing to a rise in awareness and popularity of women's cycle racing. The Matrix team is also a fantastic ambassador for The Tour Rides – official mass participation events that give amateur cyclists the chance to take on a choice of challenging routes inspired by the UK's favourite professional race, The Tour of Britain. There is no better way to engage someone in sport than letting them experience it for themselves, either as a spectator or participant, and thanks to Matrix Fitness, this is possible."

While outdoor cycling initiatives have certainly led to notoriety for the Matrix brand, as a leading fitness equipment supplier, their credentials in the indoor market are equally revered. From their range of upright, recumbent and hybrid bikes – recently undergoing a complete overhaul to enhance ergonomics and ease-of-use – to the range of indoor cycles produced via collaboration with the Indoor Cycling Group, Matrix ensures there's something for everyone; whether that's a professional cyclist seeking a high intensity interval workout, or a keep-fit enthusiast keen to improve their health or lose a few pounds.

Further information

The Matrix Fitness Grand Prix Series:

www.tourseries.co.uk/mgpseries

Tour events:

www.thetour.co.uk

Matrix Fitness – Vulpine team web:

www.onthedrops.cc

Matrix

Tel: 0800 389 6078

Facebook: MatrixFitnessUK

Twitter: MatrixFitnessUK

Web: www.matrixfitness.co.uk

2012

- After three years' riding for a JHT/Matrix Fitness sponsored team, Dani King joins 'Team Matrix' – a group of elite and up-and-coming athletes who work with Matrix to inspire and motivate people to participate; whether that is for general fitness, weight loss, or winning competitions – as an official ambassador.
- Joanna Rowsell and Dani King win Gold for Team GB at the 2012 London Olympics.
- A fifth stage is added to the Johnson Health Tech Grand Prix Series.

2013

- The team has a slight name change to the Matrix Fitness Racing Academy to reflect the team's ambitions to develop young riders.

2014

- A revised team name: Matrix Fitness – Vulpine reflects the team's kit sponsor.
- The team is selected to participate in The Women's Tour; one of the most anticipated events on the world cycling calendar for women in 2014.
- Matrix Fitness announces sponsorship of the 'Best Young Rider' jersey in the inaugural Women's Tour.
- The Johnson Health Tech Grand Prix Series is re-launched as the Matrix Fitness Grand Prix Series.

DIARY

Worldwide event listings for leisure professionals

MAY

16-18 | BodyPower

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

The consumer-focused BodyPower event attracts thousands of health and fitness enthusiasts from around the globe, presenting a diverse cross-section of the industry through an extensive exhibition, visual displays and interactive feature areas.

Web www.bodypowerexpo.co.uk**18-19 | Beauty UK**

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

The Beauty UK show brings together products, equipment, services and training from leading beauty, holistic, nail and tanning companies.

Web www.beautyserve.com**20-21 | SIBEC UK**

Venue The Belfry, West Midlands, UK

Summary

A one-to-one meeting forum bringing together suppliers and buyers in the UK's leisure, health and fitness sectors – covering the local authority, trust and education markets.

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com**27-31 | ACSM 61st Annual Meeting**

Venue Orlando, Florida, US

Summary

ACSM's annual meeting – which in 2014 will include the World Congress on the Role of Inflammation in Exercise, Health and Disease – will bring together more than 5,000 basic and applied scientists and clinical medicine professionals to learn, network and earn continuing



PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHY

The ukactive FLAME Conference culminates in the FLAME Awards dinner

education credits and continuing medical education credits. This comprehensive sports medicine and exercise science conference features programming that covers the science, practice, public health and policy aspects of sports medicine, exercise science and physical activity.

Web www.acsmannualmeeting.org**30-2 June | Rimini Wellness**

Venue Rimini Fiera, Rimini, Italy

Summary

The ninth Rimini Wellness features a VPro event with meetings and workshops for fitness professionals. It will also include 46 stages and more than 400 presenters showcasing the latest programming, from pilates and dancing to water-based activities and group cycling.

Web www.riminiwellness.com

JUNE

23-26 | 13th Annual International Conference on Health Economics, Management and Policy

Venue Athens, Greece

Summary

The aim of this conference is to bring together scholars, researchers and students from all areas of health economics, management and policy.

Web www.atiner.gr/health.htm**30-1 July | Facilities Management (FM) Forum**

Venue Whittlebury Hall Hotel & Spa, Northamptonshire, UK

Summary

Specifically organised for FM directors and managers who are directly involved in the procurement of FM products and services.

Web www.forumevents.co.uk

JULY

2 | ukactive Annual FLAME Conference

Venue Telford International Centre, Telford, UK

Summary

Offering a programme of high profile speakers, this conference is a leading educational and networking event for senior level professionals. The event will culminate in the FLAME Awards 2014.

Web www.ukactive.com

AUGUST

4-7 | 10th Annual International Conference on Kinesiology and Exercise Sciences

Venue Athens, Greece

Summary

Organised by the Athens Institute for Education and Research in conjunction with the Pan-Hellenic Association of Sport Economists & Managers.

Web www.atiner.gr**13-17 | IDEA World Fitness Convention**

Venue Anaheim, California, US

Summary

Said to be the world's largest, longest-running international fitness convention, with a programme of educational sessions.

Web www.ideafit.com/world**28-30 | 15th Annual IHRSA/ Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show**

Venue São Paulo, Brazil

Summary

A key health and wellness event for Latin America, featuring three days of seminars, networking and a trade show.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

PHOTO: www.shutterstock.com/VALUATVITALY

The NEC hosts Beauty UK in May



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EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT ...

Addressing inactivity

ukactive has thrown down the gauntlet with its *Turning the Tide* report, calling for a 1 per cent increase in levels of activity each year for five years. Is this achievable, and what are the next steps?

The situation is looking rather desperate: an estimated 25 per cent of the UK population are currently classed as inactive – with projections showing that inactivity levels are likely to increase by a further 15 per cent by 2030 – while physical inactivity is already cited by WHO as the fourth leading cause of global mortality.

In its new report, *Turning the Tide of Inactivity*, ukactive has also identified that inactive people spend 38 per cent more days in hospital than active people and visit the doctor 6 per cent more often. This is costing the UK economy £8.2bn a year (see *HCM* March 14, p28).

In response, ukactive has called on the government to place physical inactivity

as a standalone public health risk, separate from obesity and weight management. It wants public health teams to prioritise and resource physical inactivity programmes to the same level as other top tier public health risks such as smoking and alcohol abuse.

ukactive has set the target of increasing levels of physical activity by 1 per cent a year for five years; as well as improving public health and reducing mortality, this could save the NHS £1.2bn.

It's an excellent idea, but how can it be done? And how can individual health club operators play their part?

A separate piece of research by Bristol University found poor education, low household income and local area

deprivation to be barriers to activity. So too are the availability of facilities and the weather: although in some cases a smaller number of high quality, well-designed facilities have been effective in driving down inactivity levels, ukactive found that in general, areas with the highest levels of inactivity have one-third fewer leisure facilities than areas with lower levels of inactivity.

The industry will have to find a way of connecting with inactive people, creating a new breed of activity that appeals to this audience. And with inactivity highest among the lower socioeconomic groups, where price is a barrier, these activities need to be cheap – or free. So what are the next steps? We ask the experts...

WHAT'S YOUR CLUB DOING TO APPEAL TO THE INACTIVE POPULATION? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

DAVE STALKER

ukactive • CEO

At a national level, we're engaging with parliamentarians to embed physical inactivity as a top tier public health risk, outlining actions that can be taken to combat this severe risk. At a recent cross-party group of parliamentarians, they agreed progress and action needs to be taken; ukactive will be supporting them to do this.

Arrangements of a partnership with Public Health England are being finalised. This will take a localised approach, putting in place a regular, free, regional event programme, pulling together interested parties on a regular basis to share their expertise, experience and plans through established regional networks. These will be run nationwide and designed to support local authorities, public health professionals and the physical activity sector to better understand and engage with inactive people, through the sharing of best practice.

Gyms have a vital role to play in promoting the industrial scale shift that's needed to get people moving and make children physically literate. They need to look at how they are perceived by stakeholders and local communities and ensure their programmes and businesses demonstrate a genuine motivation to make a difference to their customers' health."



DR PAUL BEDFORD

Director • Retention Guru

This will be a massive challenge, because changing mass behaviour of people who are not interested in changing is not easy. But someone needed to step up to try and tackle this, so I think the industry should be positive about it.

It does put pressure on clubs, and clear direction will be needed from ukactive, as the majority of operators I have spoken to have no idea how to implement it.

For this to work, operators will need to broaden their remit, offering a wide range of activities in non-traditional fitness environments, such as walking in parks. Since they probably won't have the resources to do this, funding will be necessary.

Building a relationship with inactive people will be one of the starting points. In order to do this, the sector will have to collaborate with organisations that already have direct access to inactive people – for example, youth groups, charities for older people and housing associations. It's quicker and easier to work with those who already have a relationship with the target audience than trying to create a brand new relationship. This was the approach used by the YMCA's Activate England campaign a few years ago. Using £3.5m from the Big Lottery Fund, this project got 8,500 people active in six weeks."



Operators must consider offering activities in non-traditional fitness environments to engage new audiences

GEORGINA FORD

Director • CK Academy

“As a sector, we’re still not reaching out and appealing to those who need our skills the most. It’s critical that we continue to look outside the sector and mirror other models that have broken new ground and reached new and diverse markets. Individually we don’t have the answer, so it has to be a collective sharing of ideas, embracing technology and being honest.

Being active requires a dedicated mindset shift for many individuals, so we have to get better at the emotional connections, offering real and effective support – both in the clubs and at home – and continuing to harness expertise in understanding behavioural change.

We must attract educated, passionate, enthusiastic, empathetic staff who enjoy supporting inactive people to develop lifestyle changes that are practical, lasting and have impact. We also need inspirational, dynamic, successful leaders who will not be afraid to turn our current models on their heads and speak unpalatable truths when required.

This is a tangible target that is achievable, but not in isolation. In order to tackle inactivity, and be heard by those who need us, the sector needs government to invest in a similar fashion to the successful smoking cessation campaigns.”



MICHELLE SEGAR

SHARP Center co-director
• University of Michigan, US

“Goals like this are important for focusing efforts and building momentum. Changing behaviour in sustainable ways is the key to success.

People’s motivation for being regularly active is what determines whether physical activity feels like a chore or a gift. So rather than promoting exercise as medicine, we should be promoting physical movement as a revitalisation strategy that helps us better succeed at what matters most.

Physical activity must feel accessible and do-able, and people should be given permission to move in ways that feel good to them. People need to believe all movement they can do counts, so they can be successful each day – something that motivates more movement. Research shows that, in general, if people exercise at higher intensities than they want to – because they’ve been directed to do so or feel they should – they have increased displeasure, and this becomes a recipe for them avoiding further exercise.

Ask your members to notice how they feel when they move during the day: do they have more energy or focus? Once people become aware of how physical movement enhances how they feel and function, it will become a ‘need’ instead of a ‘should’.”



Dr Andrew Jones

The managing director of the newly merged Nuffield Health Wellbeing talks to Julie Cramer about moving further into the arena of prevention and wellbeing

As a provider of corporate wellness services to around 1,600 major companies – including half of the FTSE 100 and 40 per cent of the FTSE 250 – Nuffield Health has been making huge strides in the corporate market over the past five years.

And that impressive reach is about to get even broader with the recent announcement of a deal with UK supermarket giant Tesco to provide corporate health assessments for its senior managers nationwide.

Dr Andrew Jones (below left), until recently managing director of Nuffield's corporate wellbeing division and now head of the newly merged corporate and consumer wellbeing services, is clearly upbeat about the implications of the Tesco deal and the rapid growth of Nuffield's corporate services generally.

He says: "The partnership with Tesco is very exciting. It's one of the most successful and famous UK retailers, and we've been in conversation with them for the past 12 months about creating a health and wellbeing blueprint for their workforce. It represents a major undertaking by both Tesco and us."

Jones is currently tied by client confidentiality about the finer details of the scheme, but he can tell us that

the management health assessments have been in operation since April, and Nuffield has also built a medical centre at Tesco's HQ in Cheshunt, Hertfordshire.

The centre is a suite of rooms, which will be in addition to the 50 other Nuffield facilities around the country where Tesco staff will be able to access both general health and fitness services, as well as more targeted healthcare offers like physiotherapy.

Jones adds: "We're working very closely with Tesco on many different areas to help get their workforce fit, motivated and healthy."

INTERNAL MERGER

Jones, a GP by training, joined Nuffield in 2007 as group medical director, undertaking a variety of roles within the company before being appointed MD of corporate wellbeing in 2011.

Since December 2013, his newly expanded role involves overseeing both the corporate and consumer divisions of Nuffield, which includes the running of 200 on-site wellbeing facilities on the corporate side – with 45 of those having opened in the past two and a half years – and 65 health and fitness facilities on the consumer side, 15 of which were acquired from Greens Health Clubs in 2011.

So why has Nuffield decided to merge the two divisions, and what benefits will that bring? Jones says: "Our corporate business has been growing fast and we've come to a point where we need national points of distribution so, if we take on a big new client, their employees can get the most benefit by being able to access all points in the Nuffield chain, whether that's general health and fitness or specialist healthcare services."

"It made sense to integrate the business to maximise those benefits and achieve those synergies. Also, we did it to accelerate the next stage of our development, and push forward with new ideas for our health and wellbeing services in both markets."

"We're looking to develop occupational health and emotional resilience services and look after Nuffield patients with full rehab fitness programmes once they've completed their surgery."





The Nuffield HealthScore application allows both consumer and corporate clients to track their progress via phone or laptop



“Wellbeing needs to be an area of innovation, and opened up to a whole range of different providers”



Customers still place a high value on face-to-face interaction with Nuffield's extensive team of health and wellbeing experts

▶ TRACKING WELLBEING

Nuffield, a registered charity since its inception in 1957, is not an organisation to rest on its laurels or simply follow current trends. The products it has more recently launched – like the wellbeing package memberships into the consumer market, and its all-new health assessments targeting the corporate market – position it ever more strongly as a leader in the field of wellbeing and prevention.

“We’re calling it the new Nuffield paradigm. Over the past eight years, we’ve gradually focused a third of our business in the areas of prevention and wellbeing,” says Jones.

The new and improved Nuffield Health health assessment for businesses was rolled out last month and is being supported by a new digital e-health platform to make the service more accessible. Jones explains: “We’ve worked for two years to create one of our biggest shifts in the health assessment arena. These products have always represented an in-depth assessment, but only at one point in time. Now Nuffield is shifting from one-off assessments to creating a package of care for an individual’s ongoing needs.”

Under its new slogan of ‘With you for the journey’, Jones says the new assessments will be used to form packages that might now engage the individual for one to two years, depending on their needs. They may, for example, need support with training for a marathon, or have ongoing joint problems that need managing.

The digital platform will have a new online booking portal to facilitate connections with Nuffield advisors and experts. Alongside this is the Nuffield HealthScore app – a clinically validated online and mobile fitness and

lifestyle tool that combines expert knowledge about fitness and wellbeing with the latest smart technology. With it, employees can monitor their health and progress anytime, anywhere. HealthScore considers all aspects of an individual’s health and tracks their progress in real time via smartphone, tablet, desktop or laptop.

“Nuffield HealthScore allows the user to do all sorts of fun things to track their health and wellbeing,” says Jones. “Users can access it from any mobile device, and there’s a dynamic health score of 1,000 which can go up or down each day depending on their input.”

There’s an exercise tracker that links into the GPS on the user’s phone to track daily activities such as walking, yoga and gardening, as well as a nutrition coach that gives prompts about healthy eating based on the Mediterranean diet. The platform can even link directly to blood pressure or heart rate monitors to take real-time data.

Jones adds: “We’ll be measuring both sleep and stress levels – stress being one of the fastest growing areas of attention in corporate wellbeing. From our medical expertise, we know heart rate variability is an important indicator of stress, and we can measure that using heart rate monitors and translate the data more easily and directly through the platform.”

The Nuffield HealthScore is an integral part of the new corporate offer, but has also been made available in half of Nuffield’s consumer health and fitness clubs – either bought as an add-on or offered as part of the wellness package – with the rollout to the full estate due to be completed by September 2014.

However, Jones is keen to add: “I don’t think simply adding digital products works in itself. You have to integrate

them into user journey and ensure they add value to everything else you’re doing, making sure it’s totally joined-up.”

“People still place a high value on face-to-face interactions with our health specialists. That said, I’d say currently three in 10 of our customers like to engage with online platforms, and that figure is growing all the time.”

HEALTH MOTS

While his recent focus has been on the corporate market, Jones is equally enthusiastic about Nuffield’s developments in the consumer arena.

Everyone who joins a Nuffield health club is entitled to a free Health MOT – a 12-point health assessment that looks at key indicators and risk factors like blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, etc. This is then used to create a personalised assessment, which can help the member make decisions about what kind of health and fitness programme they wish to follow.

Jones says the uptake of the MOTs – launched in 2012 – is extremely high, with over 100,000 tests, both initial and follow-ups, being undertaken across its consumer estate each year.

With its push further into prevention and wellbeing, Nuffield also launched its Wellbeing Package in the summer of 2013, and Jones says the charity recently signed up its 5,000th wellbeing member: “It’s been so successful that we’ve had to accelerate the rollout. It’s currently offered in just over half of our clubs and will be offered in all of them in 2015.”

For an upgraded, tiered membership (£60–£90 a month, compared to around £50 for the standard membership), wellbeing members are assigned their own health mentor who they speak to regularly, and receive more joined-up ▶



The image shows a person lying on their back on a black and red SMARTSTEP mat, performing a bench press with a silver SMARTBAR. The bar has red and black weight plates. The background is dark with some light patterns.

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Nuffield sees a high participation rate in its corporate schemes, with 40–60 per cent of employees signing up

► access to specialist services – the most popular being physiotherapy, nutrition consultations and PT.

“Seven out of 10 people who now join us sign up for a 12-month membership. They know we’re not just selling them a package, but that we genuinely want to address their particular health needs, like sorting out their bad back or helping them manage their diabetes,” says Jones.

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Nuffield is the largest trading charity in the UK, with a turnover of £700m a year and any operating surplus – currently around £80m a year – reinvested into new or expanding areas of the business.

As a charity, its community-focused work – which was accelerated in 2012 – is important, including putting better health and fitness facilities into schools, universities and colleges and running them as dual-use sites (it currently has 20 such facilities, with a further seven openings planned for 2014).

Perhaps a lesser known area of Nuffield’s work is with the MoD, where for the past three years it’s delivered the Standard Nuffield Army Assessment – a fitness test for would-be recruits. Around 60,000–70,000 applicants are screened each year, with results fed back to the MoD’s recruitment teams.

In addition, Nuffield runs the health and fitness facility at the Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire, and Jones says the charity is in talks with the MoD about providing services to other parts of the armed forces. While Jones sees this as valuable work in a key public sector area, it’s clearly a very steady and healthy revenue stream for Nuffield too, with the potential to become much bigger.

Within the medical arena (Nuffield owns and runs 31 hospitals around the UK), Nuffield works with cystic fibrosis sufferers in conjunction with Great Ormond Street Hospital in London and Leeds General Infirmary. It also it takes part in a number of health pilots, with its current Neurofit programme offering strength training and physiotherapy-led classes for those with multiple sclerosis in Warwick, Newbury and Reading.

MEDICAL POTENTIAL

As a former GP who’s now professionally involved with health and wellbeing, does Jones see many opportunities for greater links between the fitness and medical sectors?

He says: “As a doctor, I know that exercise can play a positive part in just about every medical condition I’ve ever come across. It’s good if you’ve got heart disease or had a heart attack, for high blood pressure or if you’ve had a stroke, if you have lung disease or asthma. If you have arthritis, it’s good for maintaining muscle strength to protect your joints, it improves the quality of life for those with neuromotor conditions, and it’s one of the few things that can improve anxiety and depression. It also reduces your chances of getting cancer, and can help with recovery if you do get it.

“The approach of the NHS is still ‘one size fits all’, but those days have totally gone – people want personalised advice, to take part in their own healthcare, to know more about prevention, and to be given the information so they can make a choice. That’s very much at the core of what we’re trying to do at Nuffield.”

However, overall Jones finds progress in the joining up of fitness and medicine

to have been “absolutely glacial”, with programmes like GP referrals “not really working at all”. Neither was he surprised when physical activity was withdrawn from the QOF (see *HCM* Jan 14, p5).

DRIVING PARTICIPATION

But with the establishment of the Health and Wellbeing Boards, does Jones see health, fitness and wellbeing services eventually being more joined-up within government strategies?

“Working with councils, engaging with exercise referrals, diabetes care, older care and obesity – all this could be huge, but progress is still very slow. Maybe as an industry we haven’t done enough yet, but I don’t think it’s something governments can solve on their own either.

“Wellbeing needs to be an area of innovation and opened up to a whole range of different providers, businesses and charities that can bring new solutions; the best of those ideas will succeed.”

For the long term, Nuffield is “placing its bets” on prevention and wellbeing offers in both corporate and consumer markets, with the former taking the lead.

“Today’s employers absolutely get it. Every day we have conversations with people who want to help their workforce get healthier, fitter, more motivated, more productive and more engaged.

“The industry talks about static penetration rates of 12 per cent, but it’s certainly not what we see in our corporate schemes, where take-up is far higher. Around 40 to 60 per cent of employees in the estate sign up and engage in some form of activity.

“We’d love that kind of enthusiasm and engagement to spread across the general community.” ●



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CROSSFIT: NICHE OR MAINSTREAM?



CrossFit won't license chains, so clubs could look to brand their own offering

For those who are brave enough to try it, CrossFit offers fantastic results in an engaging workout that's never the same twice. But can it ever be a mass market concept?

Kath Hudson reports

Founded by Greg Glassman in 2000, the CrossFit concept sets out to "prepare trainees for any physical contingency – not only for the unknown, but for the unknowable," according to the website.

The programme incorporates high intensity interval training, Olympic lifting, power lifting, gymnastics, calisthenics and strongman exercises (see also *HCM* Jan 11, p40), with CrossFit certifying trainers and licensing gyms for an annual fee.

There's a strong group focus to the training, which is designed to build a sense of community – but at the moment it's a community from which many of us feel excluded. The CrossFit boxes tend to be minimal and raw, the

tone is sergeant majorish, and the website features über-fit people beasting themselves – not really the sort of friendly, accessible image that might help the UK fitness sector in its bid to draw more people into physical exercise.

But does this matter? Is it reasonable to have an element of fitness that's reserved for those who want to dedicate a lot of time to training and have attained a higher level of fitness? Should it stay as it is and not be diluted for the mass market, or are there ways to fine-tune the concept so more people might give it a go and reap the benefits?

Going mainstream?

Some don't believe CrossFit can be translated for the mass market. Licensed



SATS created Performance
(this image and below) to
appeal to a wider market

The Environment

For operators wanting to create a CrossFit-style club-in-club, considerations include:

- Noise pollution: Make sure the floors can deal with weights being dropped, but also site CrossFit areas away from offices or places where relaxing activities take place.
- Location: Consider zoning, as SATS has done, so the areas are part of the club – creating a buzz and introducing

people to the concept – but with some degree of separation so participants don't feel self-conscious.

- Make it accessible: "Colourful products are an excellent way to engage people," says Escape's Matthew Januszek. "Not everyone wants to flip a tractor tyre, but offer different sized tyres and different colours and suddenly flipping tyres becomes more accessible."



CrossFit operator Rachel Young, who runs independent studio mi-gym in Chelmsford, UK, is not sure health club chains could properly deliver this concept which, she says, works better on a smaller, more personal scale.

Tom Haynes, head of commercial and sports performance at Indigo 23 and owner of The Training Shed, agrees: "CrossFit is a specialist area and I don't think the average health club would be able to run an authentic class safely: the knowledge and expertise of their instructors tends to be quite limited, and clubs wouldn't have adequate space or the required equipment either."

"In addition, the underground and edgy feel of CrossFit is part of its identity and I'm not sure this would work

successfully in a mainstream health club. The CrossFit clubs tend to charge more, and in return there's a small, personal feel, with excellent coaches who know every member by name."

However Tony Buchanan, MD and founder of Absolute Performance, argues that CrossFit training methods are already in the mass market: strength and conditioning, shuttle running, Olympic lifting and functional fitness rigs are now commonplace. "It's just about going back to basics," he says. "Any health club looking to start offering CrossFit simply needs excellent coaches and a decent amount of space."

Indeed, for clubs that have already invested in functional training areas, many experts agree that only a few

tweaks are needed to offer CrossFit, or at least a CrossFit-style workout.

However, to take it mass market, the concept does need to be toned down somewhat, as the hardcore image is never going to pull in the deconditioned, older or nervous member – even though these groups could very much benefit from the style of training.

"For CrossFit to appeal to a broader market, it has to be diluted," says John Halls, sales and marketing director at Physical Company. "This isn't a bad thing, as short, sharp, effective workouts can still take place – but in a safer environment. Members will always be attracted by workouts that offer maximum results in minimum time, so clubs need to get that message across." ►

► With this focus on safety in mind, clubs must consider how to properly introduce members to the concept. Experienced, knowledgeable, ideally PT-trained Level 3 staff are vital, ensuring members are correctly instructed in safe technique – otherwise there's real potential for injury. Fitness First Middle East, which has introduced its own Xfit offering (see below), provides a 'fundamentals' class so members can learn the basics before progressing first to the 'essential' class and then the 'daily extreme' programme.

"There should be a great focus on the correct lifting techniques and a lot of training before novices are allowed to lift heavier weights," says Antti Kohvakka, sales director at York Fitness. "Clubs should develop tutorial programmes to provide this service and get members lifting correctly and safely."

Create your brand

Although going the route of getting your club licensed by CrossFit, and your trainers affiliated, allows you to benefit from the public awareness of the CrossFit brand – "the marketing has, to a degree, already been done for clubs," says Matthew Januszek of Escape Fitness – nevertheless the hardcore brand can be off-putting for many. Creating your own, more accessible brand is a way of giving this type of training a more universal appeal. And indeed health club chains have no choice in the matter, as CrossFit won't license chains.

Scandinavian chain SATS, which operates 110 clubs, has therefore created Performance. Currently offered



Fitness First Middle East created a results-driven offer called Xfit

"WE RECOGNISED THAT MUCH OF WHAT SCARES PEOPLE ABOUT CROSSFIT IS THE INDUSTRIAL ENVIRONMENT"

in 10 of its sites, it's in the process of being rolled out as it's proved successful in boosting visits, sales, retention and PT revenues, as well as attracting an even mix of males and females.

"The CrossFit brand and product is more extreme than mass market, but its principles of back to basics, functional fitness can be applied in a health club," says Daniel Almgren, SATS Nordic product manager. "It's straightforward to make the training techniques available and appealing to a broad market."

The Performance offering is delivered within a 200–300sq m arena with padded flooring and rigs, where high intensity, strength and Olympic lifting classes are offered. SATS selects its best personal trainers to run the sessions.

"We recognised that much of what scares people about CrossFit is the industrial environment, so we've set about making ours more appealing – for example, using more inviting lighting," says Almgren. "However, we've kept some of the rawness with a prison yard-style, see-through fence."

Fitness First Middle East has also created its own brand, Xfit – a mix of functional training, gymnastics, body movement and Olympic lifting. The Xfit boxes – which have no mirrors or TV screens – are kitted out with tyres, a functional training rig, medicine balls, Olympic bars and weights, plus boxes to jump over. MYZONE has been introduced to measure workout intensity and boost motivation.

"We're seeing phenomenal results, with people changing their body shape and with significant increases in fitness levels and strength. Some members have even taken part in the CrossFit Open Regionals," says Mark Botha, group operations and marketing director of Fitness First Middle East. "Xfit is popular because it's results-driven, fun, instructor-led, and offers the benefits of PT but with a group exercise dynamic."

Meanwhile Young has taken a two-pronged approach at mi-gym, using the CrossFit brand to attract those to whom it appeals and dropping it for those who would find it off-putting. "The name can be intimidating, so I call my evening classes CrossFit, but daytime sessions are Results classes," she says. "It's the same training, but 80 per cent of the membership wouldn't have come if it had been called CrossFit. To get going, I aimed my marketing at women – I knew the men, and those into CrossFit, would come anyway."

Sense of community

Undoubtedly one of the secrets to CrossFit's success is the way it has built up a community, both online and within clubs. It's this small, personal feel that leads some to doubt whether the concept can be taken mass market. However, although difficult in a large club, it's by no means impossible – it just requires energy and effort on the part of staff, with lots of personal contact both in and out of the club, follow-ups if



The Xfit boxes have no mirrors or TV screens to distract people from training



Xfit mixes functional training, gymnastics, movement and lifting

people miss class so they feel important, and good use of social media.

Young intentionally limits the size of classes so people feel special; as a result, they're very sociable with each other, going out to breakfast together after class and suchlike. Fitness First Middle East has also managed to create a strong sense of community. "We set 12-week targets based on suggestions, and everyone works to the same goal – learning a new skill such as a handstand push-up, for example, or getting a beach body – which culminates in a beach swim and BBQ," says Botha.

Although CrossFit is intended to cater for all levels and ages within one class, one quick way to create a community might be to run sessions that appeal to like-minded people. Fitness First Middle East runs a mums class, for example, scheduled after the school run, and this has proved immensely popular and generated word-of-mouth referrals.

Selling fitness

Since CrossFit won't license chains, and seems keen to protect its niche status, it's unlikely that CrossFit itself will go mass market. However, the style of

training certainly can – and is already starting to do so. If your club wants to replicate the concept, the key requirements are well-trained staff, a well thought-out environment, personal relationships with the members, and a concept that's accessible but still has an edge – don't dumb it right down.

Creating a CrossFit-style brand should result in better results for members and better retention for your club. However, it won't come without a lot of work and effort on your part. The focus must be on selling fitness, not selling memberships. ●

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escape 

The Future of Indoor Cycling

It's used by top athletes and recreational cyclists alike, and combines the latest exercise science with the exhilaration of outdoor cycling. Commercial director Richard Baker explains how fitness clubs can benefit from the Wattbike, and what developments lie ahead



How did the Wattbike come into existence?

The head of performance at British Cycling, Peter Keen – who was Chris Boardman's coach at the time – wanted to create a new type of training bike that was unlike anything else on the market. The team at Wattbike had already built a conceptual idea of what this could look like and then began to consult with Peter to develop the end result.

The product proposal came with a long wish list. The bike had to be accurate, give detailed scientific analysis, have universal appeal (from kids through to top athletes), be affordable, as well as offer an authentic ride experience that was close to an outdoor ride.

When did you launch?

After the initial discussions with Peter Keen and British Cycling it took eight years to perfect the product, launching Wattbike in the autumn of 2008. Keen had wanted an indoor bike that could test his top cyclists and also find the next generation of talent (cyclists Laura Trott and Lizzie Armistead were both talent ID-ed on Wattbike), but it soon became apparent that the Wattbike had a much broader appeal.

From the outset we worked closely with National Governing Bodies and became involved with Olympic sports like rowing, track and field and hockey. UK Sport and the English Institute of Sport adopted the bike early on, and we've also grown a very large presence

in the military, especially at rehab centres like Headley Court.

In the past couple of years, with the explosion of indoor cycling in fitness clubs and dedicated studios, we've seen 100 per cent growth in sales year on year in this market too.

What's so unique about the Wattbike?

Unlike most indoor bikes you'll find on the gym floor, the Wattbike has a chain, chainring and sprocket just like a normal cycle enabling the Wattbike to freewheel and match the experience of riding outdoors.

Part of the Wattbike's resistance is magnetic, but most of it comes from a wind turbine situated at the front of the bike, which is the smoothest way of applying force to the rider. It's also

calibrated exactly as it would be to a rider on the open road.

It also offers a Polar View, which is able to track the force of the left leg and right leg and evaluate how efficient and effective your pedalling is. The majority of people have imbalances in their legs, which can travel up to cause discomfort and injury in the lower back. The Wattbike is the only piece of kit that can accurately assess this imbalance.

Why would fitness clubs want a Wattbike?

It's a very effective diagnostic tool, so it's popular with personal trainers who can accurately measure the progress of clients. Because the Wattbike measures power so accurately, and doesn't just depend on heart rate, it can more effectively calculate your best training zone so you get a more efficient workout.

The bike can be marketed as a complete fitness test, and has six key tests built in, including VO2 Max (which is within 4 per cent accuracy of a full laboratory gas analysis).

Can it be used in a group cycle setting?

Yes of course, and with the huge boom in cycling many enthusiasts are actively looking for gyms offering Wattbikes.



Recent installation of a Wattbike Studio at Cadence Performance in London



Wattbike ambassador and Olympic and double World Track Cycling champion Joanna Rowsell



Real time data ensures that users are training in the right zone

training card displayed next to the bike (currently branded for cyclists, general fitness and weight management) and take themselves through a programme.

What's new and what's next for Wattbike?

We're beginning to expand our training programmes, working with all the leading NGBs to find the best training methods that can be applied to the bike. If people follow these programmes, they can really get phenomenal results.

Our other big area of expansion is technology, looking at how we can best enable the push and pull of data. The monitor is ANT+ enabled which allows users to wirelessly transfer their Wattbike session data to products and services such as Garmin, Suunto or MyZone. The next stage is looking at making our monitors wi-fi enabled, so when a person has finished their Wattbike workout they can store their data in the cloud, drawing it down again for the next workout.

In April, Wattbike's advanced technology gained recognition at the Sports Technology Awards, where it won the award for Best Training Product and was praised by judges for its "performance indicators, real time feedback and realistic styling".

We were delighted to be recognised in this way, but it's also important to point out that while Wattbike is a highly scientific training tool, it's also a very intuitive machine that, quite simply, is great fun to ride. Anyone who loves riding a bike will love riding a Wattbike.

Wattbike

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There are around seven million gym members in the UK and 13 million cyclists. That gives some idea of how clubs can grow their membership by attracting a whole new and loyal market.

The Wattbike comes with its own software called Power Cycling, which enables clubs to easily set up their own classes. This software calculates the right training zone for each cyclist, which means that you could have Bradley Wiggins in the same class as a complete novice and each would get an effective workout because they're matched to their personal training zone.

It's also one of the very few pieces of gym kit that can be incorporated into a HIIT class like Tabata, because resistance can be set quickly for each member and it measures the net force applied to the pedals accurately.

How can clubs 'sell' the Wattbike to members?

We offer comprehensive training to clubs and like to include all their sales

team. It's easy to walk past the Wattbike thinking it's just another exercise bike.

But once they know, for instance, that it's used extensively by top England rugby and football players who can offload their weight and use it as an effective rehab and training tool, this immediately widens its appeal.

Similarly, when athlete Jessica Ennis missed the 2008 Olympic Games through injury, her coach Toni Minichiello started to use the Wattbike as a conditioning tool. However, he soon realised he could use it to assess her leg speed and power, and so it became an integral part of her training programme right up to London 2012.

When Virgin Active became sponsors of the London Triathlon, it needed to offer members an effective means of training for a triathlon, and so Wattbike became its product of choice.

We also provide marketing tools for use in-club. If there's no instructor on hand a member can pick up a

Doing social good

The *Fitness Sector Social Good Report* explores the idea that a business with a purpose beyond maximising self-interests can ensure long-term relevance with stakeholders, creating a more valued and sustainable organisation.

This report is written with the private fitness sector in mind, because the pursuit of profit is very often a key measure of how they keep score. The public and third sectors, by contrast, measure themselves by the social impact they create in their communities, while conscious of ensuring financial sustainability. However, all organisations in the fitness sector, however they may be legally constituted, have a fundamental obligation to inspire people to live more active, healthier lives and to pursue this purpose in a responsible, authentic and compassionate way.

The report is structured around eight themes: purposeful, responsible, authentic, generous, compassionate, connected, collaborative and influential. We will take a look at each of these themes in turn, and what they mean for your business.

Purposeful

When I discover a new and interesting new business, there are normally two things I immediately want to understand. First, what the business makes – its product. Then I want to know the founder's back story: why did they start the business and what's the big idea that's fuelling it? Understanding its

Does your business look beyond profit to embrace a more socially conscious agenda? Ray Algar reports on the findings of his new *Fitness Sector Social Good Report*



purpose – the shared understanding of the reason why the business exists – is the filter I use to help me decide if I'm going to care about this business. Remember, if I care, I'm inclined to share the organisation's story with my friends and contacts. I believe clarity of purpose matters, because it unites people and drives actions.

As Nikos Mourkogiannis, global expert in strategic leadership, says: "Purpose is a reason for doing something that appeals to a person's sense of what is right and what is worthwhile. So it creates a sense of obligation. Business purpose is the most powerful but least leveraged weapon in leadership."

There are four distinct types of business purpose. The first is Heroism – driving the standards for the world to follow (Facebook, Zipcar). The second is Excellence – providing the best possible product or service, with an insatiable pursuit of ever-higher

standards (Apple, Lego). Then there's Discovery – a love of the new and innovative, where the founders are often intellectually curious and have a desire to re-invent industries (Twitter, Samsung). Finally, there's Altruism – serving the needs of other people (Disney, Kickstarter).

The fitness sector is driven by an altruistic purpose. However, some external industry observers see a contradiction. Giles Gibbons, CEO of Good Business, comments: "What's interesting about the fitness industry is that it has an incredibly strong social purpose: to help others. One that's well understood by the general public. It's a fantastic place to start and actually quite rare. I think the challenge for the fitness industry is that it seems to forget about this and sees people as numbers, thinking of it as a cost-driven business. As a result, I don't think it's achieving the aspiration, the loyalty and the warmth it should have from such an important societal function."

So consider this... What does your organisation fundamentally stand for? Is your organisation creating a legacy that will be long remembered?

Responsible

In 1970, Milton Friedman, the Nobel prize-winning economist, wrote a famous essay in the *New York Times* magazine entitled 'The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits'.

Figure 1: Multiple responsibilities of a modern business





PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/DEKLORENAX

By mobilising their members and other stakeholders, gyms have an opportunity to have a real impact on their communities

More than 44 years have since passed and the world of business is now very different, with the 'responsibilities' of business arguably far more complex to define (Fig 1, p46). Now, a growing number of businesses routinely invest in social and environmental projects that may seem well outside the scope of their core business activity.

For example, over this past winter, Innocent Drinks encouraged people across the UK to knit little woolen hats to adorn the tops of their smoothie bottles. The company donated 25 pence to the charity Age UK each time a bottle with a hat was sold. The motivation was to try and reduce the number of old and frail people dying from the cold weather in England and Wales. So what's the connection between a business that liquidises fruit and an elderly person who has never purchased a smoothie? It seems as though many businesses are fundamentally redefining their role

The fitness industry has an incredibly strong social purpose: to help others. But it seems to forget about this and sees people as numbers

in society, which is reshaping their perspective of who is a stakeholder.

So consider this... How much clarity is there in your organisation about core responsibilities? Would a neutral person conclude that your organisation's terms of business are transparent, fair and reasonable?

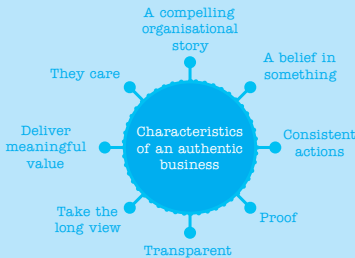
Authentic

'Authentic' means to be real or genuine. In a business context, it translates to: 'This is who we are and this is what we stand for. Please come and join us if this matters to you as well.' When an individual and a business do genuinely connect, there's a meeting of both heart and mind. Customers become enthusiastic advocates who just love talking about your organisational story.

I believe an authentic business has many different facets or characteristics (see Figure 2, p48).

So what's your organisation's story? Do you have one, and would it captivate a room full of strangers? This matters, because a remarkable story has the potential to rapidly spread through a person's network – and networks today are larger and more efficient than at any other time in the history of humanity. Organisations with a remarkable story will get more mentions on social

Figure 2: Characteristics of an authentic business



Visual Insight, Ray Algar, Oxygen Consulting, 2014

► networks, powered by an individual's passion and excitement to inform others. This means they spend less on paid advertising trying to convince others to 'like' them.

So consider this... Does your organisation have a compelling story that spreads far beyond your geographic boundaries? How good is your organisation at proving the difference it makes to the lives of customers?

Generous

Organisations need to have a reputation for authentic generosity if they're to remain relevant to their stakeholders. Throwing out a few scraps of charity once a quarter is neither credible nor sufficient: it smells of putting the interests of the business first, especially when the press release is rushed out, talking more about the act itself while lacking proof of results and the difference made.

So is your business a 'net giver' or 'net taker', because communities will care if your club is perceived as the former. What is a 'net giver'? Put simply, it's a club that, over the course of time, gives more to its community than it takes out. A business never wants to have a reputation for being a 'net taker', as it's a label that's very hard to shrug off.

As Thomas Kolster said in his book *Goodvertising*: "Generosity can be a clear differentiator in a crowded market. Generosity is a powerful story to tell about a brand and can attract new customers, new suppliers and partnerships."

So consider this... How generous is your organisation when the press

and media aren't looking? How could a sustained sense of generosity be embedded into your organisation?

Compassionate

Having compassion means feeling concern for the misfortune of others. Together with the feeling, there's often a strong desire to relieve it.

Compassion comes naturally to organisations whose purpose – the reason the business exists – focuses on serving others. For example, Tata Group – the Indian conglomerate employing 450,000 people in 85 countries – says it exists to "improve the quality of life of the communities we serve". Jamsetji Tata, the founder of the company, once said: "The community is not just another stakeholder in the business, but in fact the very purpose for its existence."

Good Business' Gibbons discusses the idea of organisations showing compassion at the right moment. Unfortunately, the fitness sector has an inconsistent track record in this respect. There are too many cases of members feeling let down when diagnosed with life-threatening conditions, for example, only to discover their gym insists on them fulfilling the full terms of their contract or requesting termination fees. The Office of Fair Trading has been working with the fitness sector for years to improve and simplify cancellation rights, but should it really require the intervention of a regulator to arrive at the compassionate thing to do?

Consider this... What is the typical response from your organisation when a community in which you operate is in need? Do staff within your organisation

Organisations need to have a reputation for authentic generosity if they're to remain relevant. Throwing out a few scraps of charity once a quarter is neither credible nor sufficient

have the authority to exercise acts of compassion which may require a financial trade-off?

Connected

Being connected is now a perplexing thing, given that more of us are now digitally tethered than ever before. Around the globe, 2.4 billion people are now connected to the internet – that's one third of the world's population. Facebook reached the magic number of one billion active monthly users as long ago as October 2012 and Zuckerberg, Facebook's founder, has said he would like to connect the other six billion too.

So it's now becoming much easier for organisations to connect with our devices, but getting into our heads and hearts is far more challenging.

When an individual and a business do genuinely connect, it's an extraordinary thing. It literally is a meeting of minds. During 2013, I was in Brazil and took the opportunity to visit the remarkable Ecofit club in São Paulo. Opened in 2005 by Antônio and Eduardo Gandra, Ecofit is probably the world's most environmentally friendly fitness club. The brothers have intelligently combined their passion for the environment and wellbeing into a unique business that members love being a part of. The business has partnerships with Greenpeace Brazil, WWF and 14 other health and environmental organisations. This amazing club feels more like an environmental academy that also happens to be a fitness club. Members love the club and what it stands for.

So consider this... Do you truly understand why customers have



The Gandra brothers' gym in Brazil: "Probably the world's most eco-friendly"

chosen to forge a connection with your organisation? Are customers deeply connected to your organisation, or are most only there until something more remarkable comes along?

Collaborative

Organisations that reach out, rather than build from within, feel more relevant to the role that customers and other stakeholders now wish to play. Co-creating is becoming the new normal, whereby customers and organisations collaboratively innovate over the long term. It's about working with stakeholders to address future challenges and unlock opportunities, giving stakeholders a vested interest.

Take Kiva.org, a remarkable American non-profit organisation with a "mission to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty". Kiva leverages the web and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions to allow individuals anywhere to lend as little as US\$25. These micro-loans support people wishing to start or grow a small business in 73 countries. Kiva recently reached US\$500m (£307m) in loans made by its community of one million micro-lenders. Collaborative projects like Kiva are very exciting on so many levels: they allow anyone, anywhere with access to the web, to participate in solving social inequalities.

So consider this... Does your organisation possess a 'we know best' mindset, or does it collaborate with its customers? How many different ways does your organisation encourage a continuous conversation

and feedback with stakeholders around service innovation?

Influential

The marketing team of one of the UK's leading health club businesses is very excited as they recently reached 100,000 'likes' on Facebook. It's been a long journey of 'nudging' – 'like' our page and receive a free one-day gym pass – but in March the milestone was reached. So it's official: according to Facebook, they're one of the most popular gym brands in the country.

Of course, it feels good to be 'popular', but it's influence that really matters. Popularity can be bought or faked, whereas influence is earned and authentic. Popular businesses do not necessarily have the authority to move people; influential ones do. Influence is the capacity to affect the way that people think and behave, and this only occurs if they believe in your organisation, loving what the organisation stands for and the way it's championing a better future for others.

As fitness businesses grow in size, some begin to potentially accumulate greater levels of influence, which may not at first be apparent. Virgin Active, for example, now has more than 1.2 million global members in seven countries, while Planet Fitness, the American low-cost gym brand, has more than five million, equivalent to the population of Norway. Add to this employees, suppliers and other stakeholders, and you have businesses with the potential to create dramatic social impact – provided they're



Kiva's micro-loans are changing lives

motivated to harness it. This means more than improving the lives of members: it means the mobilisation of all stakeholders to enrich the lives of other, less fortunate people.

So consider this... Does your organisation pursue popularity or influence? Does your organisation possess sufficient influence to affect the way that people think and behave?

Pieces of the same puzzle

My report has focused on eight themes because they all seem so interconnected. How can an organisation be socially responsible if its purpose is unclear? How can it be influential if it's not authentic and connected?

What the recent global economic crisis has shown us is that the pursuit of a narrow and self-serving agenda is unsustainable and simply unfair. It may work for an organisation in the short term, but at some point Twitter will realise there's an injustice taking place and its 241 million active users will get to work to right the wrong. ●

Ray Algar is managing director of Oxygen Consulting, a company that provides strategic business insights for organisations connected to the global health and fitness industry. He recently founded Gympopia, a digital platform that shares stories about how the fitness industry is creating positive social impact in communities around the world – see p50. Download a complimentary copy of the Fitness Sector Social Good Report: <http://bit.ly/SocialGoodReport>



Step forward to save lives

Ray Algar reports on an initiative which went beyond fundraising and into the very personal sphere of bone marrow donation

During July 2013, Gymtopia.org published a very personal story. It was about Chris Spencer, manager of Hornchurch Sports Centre in Essex, UK. Chris had leukaemia and was urgently in need of a life-saving bone marrow (blood stem cell) transplant.

According to the Anthony Nolan charity, there are currently around 1,800 people in the UK in need of a bone marrow transplant – usually their last chance of survival.

Who was Anthony Nolan?

At just three years of age, Anthony Nolan was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder and his only hope was a bone marrow transplant. No-one in his immediate family was a match, and a transplant using bone marrow from an unrelated donor had never succeeded because there was no database to find matching donors. So Anthony's mother Shirley campaigned and fundraised to create a central database. Sadly Anthony died, but his legacy is the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Register, the largest of its kind in the world.

Mobilising members

Over the course of 2013, staff at Hornchurch Sports Centre – operated by SLM under its Everyone Active brand – began fundraising and driving awareness of the Anthony Nolan charity, asking customers to join the donor database. In a single evening during July 2013, staff encouraged 154 customers to join the



A superhero fundraising day at Hornchurch Sports Centre in Essex

Gymtopia – a place where clubs do social good

Gymtopia was conceived by founder and chief engagement officer Ray Algar, who believes the global health and fitness industry has enormous influence and potential to do good in the world, beyond its immediate customers. The idea of Gymtopia is simple: to curate and spread remarkable stories in which the fitness industry uses its influence to reach out and support an external community in need. It was created with the generous support of various UK and overseas individuals and organisations.

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



database, meaning 154 more opportunities to potentially save a life. The centre website and Facebook page are still used to continually remind customers to join the register.

What can the UK fitness sector do?

A great deal. If just 6 per cent of the sector's customers joined the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Register, it would instantly double in size – something that has taken 40 years to achieve. Here are four things you might consider doing:

- Call the Anthony Nolan helpline on +44 (0)303 303 0303 and discuss how to harness your community
- Send this short video link the next time you send an email to customers – <http://bit.ly/AnthonyNolanVideo>
- Run a donor recruitment event
- Encourage customers to join the Bone Marrow Register – <http://bit.ly/AnthonyNolanRegister>

Update: Chris found a donor match and had a transplant in October 2013. He hopes to return to work soon. ●

BECOMING A DONOR

Beginning the journey to saving a life is easy. Just fill in a short online questionnaire – <http://bit.ly/AnthonyNolan> – and then provide a small saliva sample. If there's a match with someone on the register, the final step is similar to giving blood.

The ideal donor is:

- Living in the UK
- In good health
- Aged 16–30. Younger people make the most successful donors for blood cancer patients. Anthony Nolan is also eager to recruit more young men from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

IN A NUTSHELL

Initiative by: Everyone Active (UK) – www.everyoneactive.com
Location: UK
Status: Ongoing
Impact: Global
Gymtopia keywords: Health & Wellbeing, Medical Research
Charity supported: Anthony Nolan

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Run 3D operates what it says is the UK's first 3D motion analysis service

THE POWER OF PREHAB

Not so long ago, a whistle-stop tour of the facilities and an induction constituted the standard welcome for a new gym member. But increasingly clubs are recognising that more can be done to set new joiners off on the right foot. One of the buzzwords is 'prehab' – assessing and addressing an exerciser's likely limitations in relation to their goal, with injury prevention in mind.

"Before starting exercise, people are often advised to see their GP," says Michael Goulden, director of Integra, an independent gym based in east London. "The doctor will generally check their heart, blood pressure and weight,

but seldom looks at joint health and musculoskeletal factors."

Integra uses 'Muscle Activation Technique' (MAT), a method of testing and then restoring an individual's ability to develop efficient muscle contraction around each joint, before prescribing an appropriate exercise programme. Created by American strength and conditioning specialist Greg Roskopf, MAT is currently available at just a handful of centres in the UK.

"We use MAT to set up every client with a solid base on which to build," explains Goulden. "It helps prepare them for sport or exercise and get better results."

Sam Murphy reports on the value of pre-exercise assessment, not only to prevent injury among elite athletes, but to help members stick to their programme and feel looked after

KEEPING MEMBERS MOVING

Recent industry figures on retention show that just 52 per cent of people maintain their gym membership for 12 months. Fewer than a quarter maintain it for one or two years. The reasons are manifold, but it's likely that at least some of those abandoning the gym have been laid low by injuries. Or, says Gareth Cole – head of education at The Third Space, a health club operator with two central London sites – because they aren't getting the benefits they expected.

The Third Space launched its screening service 'Prehab, Rehab, Performance' (PRP) last year. "It's designed to assess readiness for the task ▶



Whether you're a PT or a large health club, if someone gets injured on your watch, you lose them as a customer

► in hand, be it running a marathon or regaining strength following an injury," explains Cole. "We're not looking at any blueprint of how a body should move – it's individual. We're fitting the client to their goal, not the other way round."

PRP involves four main assessments: gait (walking and running), bilateral and unilateral squatting and shoulder mobility. "This establishes a start point and signposts where we need to investigate further," says Cole. After the 60-minute screening, clients receive a video report outlining the trainer's findings and recommendations. They are then encouraged to work with a PT within the club to address any limitations or weaknesses identified.

Meanwhile, at 37° – a group of three health clubs in Surrey and London – a LifeScore screen is free to members (£150 to non-members). This one-to-one assessment, described as a 'total body-mapping tool', looks at posture and gait, strength, body composition, nutrition and hydration. You can even opt to pay extra for a DNAfit test, to ensure your diet and training are optimal for your genetic make-up.

Independent operators are at the helm of the prehab trend – typically high-end gyms with specialist staff. But Goulden believes any club could benefit from offering similar services. "Whether you're a PT or a large health club, if someone gets injured on your watch, you lose them as a customer," he says. "It's in everyone's interests – the club and the user – to minimise the risk of injuries by introducing initial screening and regularly monitoring exercise performance."



Nuffield's Health MOT measures factors related to a client's overall health

MEMBER SUPPORT

Cole and Goulden both have extensive specialist knowledge of movement – including neuroscience and motor learning theory – so are well-positioned to offer in-depth musculoskeletal screening. The average gym instructor, however, isn't likely to have the necessary level of education or experience. So that means further training, or taking on specialist staff.

"Whether these services add value depends on how well they are delivered," says Dr Paul Bedford, a specialist in member retention. "Research suggests they can contribute to retention, but unfortunately most operators are not prepared to invest in the training required to make them work."

Goulden agrees, but believes that trainers and clubs need to take more responsibility for ongoing training and development. "Too often, the approach is 'I've done my training course – now I know everything I need to know,'" he says. To encourage and facilitate learning, Goulden runs regular study groups and courses at Integra, which are open to all health and fitness professionals.

Bedford isn't convinced a significant number of memberships fall by the wayside due to injury, but believes there's an issue with discomfort in the early days of exercise. "A high heart rate, profuse sweating and burning muscles signal progress to the experienced exerciser, but to a beginner they can feel more like a medical emergency," he says. "Having some guidance and reassurance through that period could be beneficial."

Goulden supports the idea of more 'hand-holding' and monitoring early on.

"Instead of a bog-standard induction, why not offer a six-week 'way in to exercise'?" he suggests. "It could focus on really finding out what the client's needs are and educating them about movement. This would help ease them into exercise and build a stronger relationship between club and client."

Nuffield Health's Fitness and Wellbeing Centres are already on the ball with such an offering. All new members get a Health MOT – a clinical assessment of overall health, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, aerobic fitness and resting heart rate. But Nuffield's recently introduced Wellbeing membership option also provides ongoing individual support and monitoring (see also p34).

Wellbeing members get four one-to-one appointments with an expert of their choice – a physiologist, physiotherapist, nutritionist or personal trainer – as well as a free physiotherapy session (which could be used as a pre-exercise musculoskeletal MOT) and four sessions with a health mentor.

"Our health mentors are educated by our Fitness Academy to a significantly higher standard than the average personal trainer," says Natalie Cornish, the company's fitness and wellbeing director. "We educate them not only on how to deliver exercise prescription, but also on nutrition, sleep and stress. All of our training is underpinned by effective coaching and understanding of how we can help our members achieve behavioural change."

How has the membership been received? "The comments have been incredibly positive," says Cornish. "We

Instead of a bog-standard induction, why not offer a six-week 'way in to exercise' course?

run feedback surveys twice a year and our members feel more supported, find our health clubs less intimidating and are more confident about achieving their goals. We're also getting feedback that, in some cases, members are specifically choosing our clubs because we provide a more supportive membership option."

THIRD PARTY EXPERTISE

But if you're not in the market for to provide such a service, the other option is to find a partner who is.

Six Physio is a London-based chain of 10 physiotherapy clinics that offers a range of assessment services. "These reflect Six Physio's company mantra 'to cure, not treat' and differentiate us from many other physiotherapists by identifying problem areas even before symptoms present themselves," says Robert Crowfoot. "From a business perspective, assessments have proved a big pull for many new clients. We've also seen increased demand from existing clients who, following treatment by Six Physio's rehab specialists, have signed up for assessment services for injury prevention purposes."

Take-up of running assessments has grown more than threefold since November 2012, and cycling assessments almost twofold.



Members who feel monitored and looked after are less likely to quit

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WHAT WE LIVE FOR



PHOTO: WWW.ISTOCK.COM/BIGWAVEMEDIA

Prehab services are increasingly popular in the City, where cash-rich, time-poor clients want to maximise every workout

- While there are no official partnerships, individual clinics within the chain have built strong links with the gyms and PTs that they rate highly in their area, so that they can work together to meet a client's needs.

Six Physio movement assessments use an iPad set-up to video clients performing their chosen activity. "We can identify areas that may need a little more work, either because they're not moving well or not stabilising well," explains Carla Lodweijks, clinic director at the Fleet Street branch. Real-time ultrasound is also used to monitor different muscles during movement. "Our aim is to provide a comprehensive assessment and ensure that the client goes away with a clear idea of the exercises they need to do to prevent injury," she adds.

Meanwhile, Run 3D is a specialist within the running arena and claims to be the UK's first company to offer a three-dimensional motion analysis service. "We assess running technique from above, to the side and behind, comparing the results to our database of thousands of runners to advise on what injuries a runner may be vulnerable to and how to prevent them," explains director Dr Jessica Leitch.

Run 3D's flagship clinic is in Oxford, but it also franchises the Run 3D service to sports injury clinics, podiatrists and physiotherapists.

Complex terminology won't put your members at ease. You don't want people to leave an assessment feeling that they are 'broken' and need to be 'fixed'

"Clinics lease the equipment from us and we train them in how to use it," says Leitch. "They then make revenue by selling the service to their clients."

Due to the specialist nature of the analysis, a healthcare professional (such as a physio, biomechanist, sports therapist or sports massage therapist) is needed on-site to interpret the data in a meaningful way. "Thus far, we've been approached by healthcare professionals who want to make their clinics stand out from the crowd," says Leitch. "But that's not to say we wouldn't be open to gyms and health clubs taking on the system, as many now have such specialists on-board anyway."

Bedford agrees that forging links with external experts could be a good way of offering specialist services to club members. But he has a caveat: choose carefully. "Complex terminology that

might be acceptable within a specialist clinic won't put your members at ease," he says. "And you don't want people to leave an assessment with the feeling that they are 'broken' and need to be 'fixed.'"

PERCEIVED VALUE

There's no doubt that there's a growing demand for prehab services – particularly in areas like the City of London, where hardcore exercisers are cash-rich but time-poor and want to maximise every workout. But can prehab earn its keep? While Bedford says it's difficult to quantify the impact such services have on member retention and exercise adherence without data, Nuffield's experience suggests investing in pre-exercise assessment and early-days support adds value when it's included within a membership cost.

Paying services like MAT and PRP bring in their own revenue. MAT at Integra costs from £90 per session. A PRP screen at The Third Space, regardless of whether you're a member, costs £150, with an additional charge of £90 for any follow-up sessions – alongside fees earned from any PT sessions the client may take up. But Costa believes its contribution goes beyond the club's coffers. "It adds perceived value," he says. "Members feel more cared for. I'd like to think that, in time, this sort of service could be industry standard." ●

ASHBOURNE
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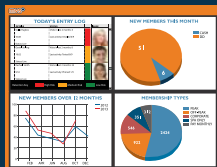
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The Human Touch

What forms of communication do your members value? In the second part of his series based on the findings of the TRP10,000™ study, Dr Melvyn Hillsdon looks at the art of communication



Table 1: Communication type received by gender, age group, length of membership and visit frequency

	COMMUNICATION TYPE RECEIVED					
	Reception staff	Fitness staff	Tel	Email	SMS	Social media
Gender						
Females	45.9	40.8	4.1	45.5	4.4	10.3
Males	36.5	30.8	2.6	53.4	5.4	9.8
Age group						
16-24	31.7	35.6	2.58	49.9	4.8	12.2
25-34	31.2	34.5	2.36	50.2	4.6	12.4
35-44	41.4	35.8	3.67	48.5	4.8	11.9
45-54	46.5	37.0	3.69	49.1	5.9	8.4
55-64	57.7	39.6	4.74	45.7	4.4	4.7
65+	66.6	43.0	6.33	48.6	3.0	4.6
Months since joining						
3 < 6	33.8	33.9	4.19	48.3	6.6	9.4
>=6 to <12	33.1	34.1	2.05	55.0	5.2	11.4
>=12 to <36	38.7	38.8	2.94	52.3	3.9	11.8
>=36	62.5	39.1	4.47	40.2	3.5	7.8
Visit frequency						
Less than 1x week	37.6	27.7	2.68	49.2	5.4	8.6
Less than 2x week	41.4	36.5	3.42	49.3	4.1	9.8
Less than 3x week	43.9	43.4	3.4	48.3	5.1	10.9
More than 3x week	50.7	44.2	5.74	47.5	5.7	13.4

Clubs interact with their members in a variety of ways. When members visit their clubs, face-to-face communication channels are via both reception and fitness staff. Away from the club, they receive communication via phone calls, SMS, email and social media. But what level of communication are they receiving, what specific channels of communication do they value, and what quantity and/or types of communication are associated with improved membership retention?

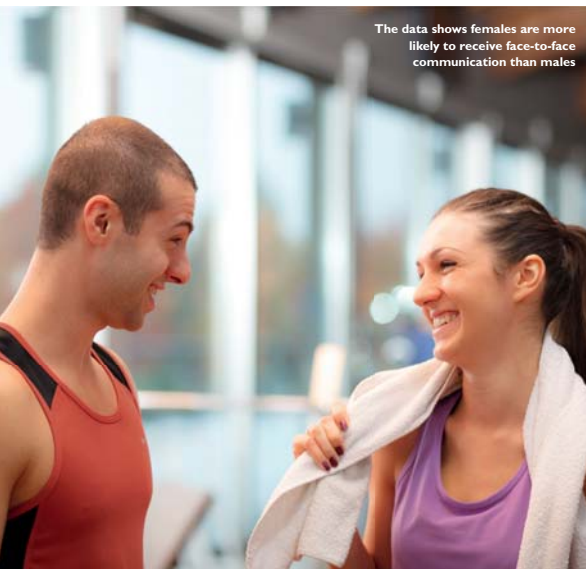
What communication occurs?

Members surveyed were asked whether reception and/or fitness staff spoke to them during their last visit. In addition, they were asked whether they had received a courtesy phone call or email, SMS text or message/information via social media. Finally, members were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about how much they valued each channel of communication.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of members who reported receiving each type of communication. Less than half of members reported that fitness staff and reception staff spoke to them during their last visit. The most common form of communication away from the club was email, with just under half of members reporting receiving a courtesy email within the last month.

Does communication vary according to gender, age or length of membership? Table 1 shows that females are more likely to receive face-to-face and telephone communication than males, but a little less likely to receive a courtesy email. Face-to-face and telephone communication also increases by age group, but older members are less likely to receive messages via social media.

Longer-standing members are much more likely to report being spoken to by reception staff at their last visit compared to newer members. This is also true for fitness staff communication, albeit the difference is smaller. Although longer-standing members are less likely to receive a SMS text than newer



The data shows females are more likely to receive face-to-face communication than males

About TRP 10,000™

Conducted in partnership with The Retention People, TRP 10,000™ is the biggest and most comprehensive survey of member behaviour ever carried out in the health and fitness industry: 10,000 health and fitness members completed a baseline survey of their exercise habits and membership behaviour between July and September 2013. During regular intervals over the coming years, they will be followed up to measure changes to their habits and membership behaviour.

The results reported in this article are for members who completed the survey between July and September 2013 and who were followed up until the end of January 2014. During the follow-up period, 1,526 of participating members cancelled their membership.

For more details of the methodology, see part one of the series – HCM April 14, p38.

members, there are no clear trends in external club communications by length of membership.

Members who use their club more frequently report receiving more communication from reception and fitness staff, via phone and social media.

What communication is welcome?

Fitness and reception staff communication are the most valued, with nearly nine in 10 members saying they value fitness staff communication (see Figure 2). Of the external methods of communication, email is easily the most valued – this is consistent across age groups, length of membership and usage patterns – with phone calls the least valued. Within this, however, males report valuing any communication form less than females (data not shown).

Older members value reception and fitness staff communication more than younger members, and are more receptive to courtesy telephone calls. They value SMS texts and social media communications less, with these being more valued by younger members.

A similar pattern is observed by length of membership: long-standing members value face-to-face communication above

Fig 1: Proportion of members reporting different communication methods

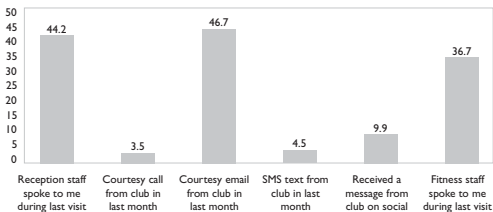
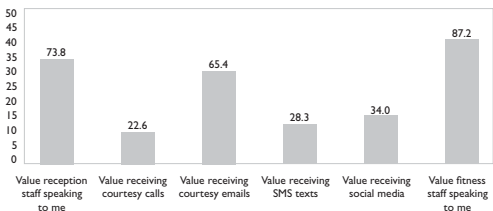


Fig 2: Proportion of members who say they value different types of communication



“Members receiving face-to-face communication have significantly higher retention rates, yet fewer than half of members report that reception and fitness staff spoke to them at their last visit”



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SMS texts and social media communication are valued more by younger members

► external communication. Members who attend their club regularly value all forms of communication more than members who attend irregularly.

The grey columns in Figure 3 show the percentage of members who report both receiving and valuing each type of communication. The purple columns show the percentage of members who report receiving each type of communication, but who say they do not value them. For example, 56 per cent of members who value being spoken to by reception staff say they were spoken to by these staff at their last visit, while 12 per cent who do not value being spoken to by reception staff were spoken to.

The grey columns highlight that there's considerable scope for increasing all types of communication to members who would value it. This is especially true in the most valued communication types: fitness and reception staff interactions and courtesy emails.

As noted above, the purple bars in Figure 3 represent members who did not value each of the communication methods – and one stands out. Nearly a third of members who said they did not value email communication reported they had nevertheless received emails. As 32 per cent of members do not value email communication, the potential is there to irritate quite a number of members with unsolicited emails. Perhaps surprisingly, just a quarter of the members who value communication via social media actually report receiving any.

Is communication associated with retention?

Retention rates were calculated based on the time from questionnaire completion (when all members were live) to either the cancellation date (for cancelled members) or 31 January 2014 for live members. Communication methods were separated into two

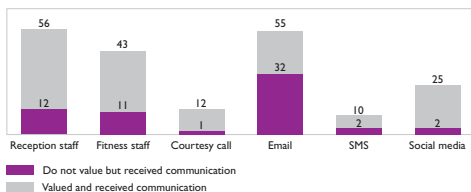
groups. Face-to-face communications were scored '0' if members reported no reception or fitness staff communication at their last visit, '1' if either the reception or fitness staff spoke to them, and '2' if both spoke to them. Too few records were available to examine each of the other methods separately, so external communications were assigned '1' if any were reported (phone calls, emails, texts and social media) or '0' if none were reported.

Figure 4 shows that, compared to not being spoken to at their last visit, members who report being spoken to by either the reception staff or fitness staff have higher retention rates. Further, members who are spoken to by both sets of staff have even higher rates. These findings are true for members at any membership stage (data not shown).

However, Figure 5 shows that receiving external communications in the previous month is unrelated to retention at any period after joining. Although numbers are a little small to formally report, there's a general trend in the data that indicates that members who receive the communication style they value have the highest retention rates, while those who do not receive what they value have the lowest rates.

Only one exception to this trend was observed: members who received emails they did not value had lower retention rates than members who valued them and did not receive them, suggesting that unsolicited emails may be detrimental.

Fig 3: Proportion of members receiving communications according to whether they value them





Clubs should create a 'conversation culture', maximising opportunities for face-to-face communication with members

Fig 4: Retention rate by level of face-to-face communication

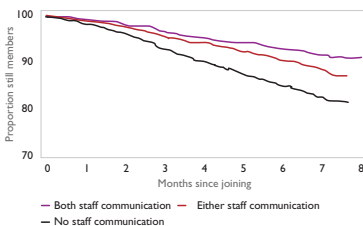
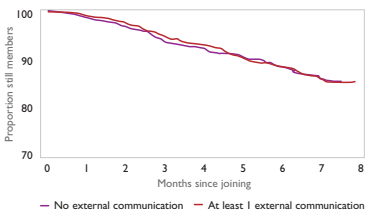


Fig 5: Retention rate by external communication



A plan of action

Members primarily value face-to-face communication from both reception and fitness staff; members receiving such communication have significantly higher retention rates. However, despite this impact on retention, fewer than half of members say that reception and fitness staff spoke to them at their last visit.

Emails are also valued by around two-thirds of members, but again 45 per cent of members do not receive them. On the other hand, 32 per cent of members who do not value emails received them, and there's some evidence that this may increase the risk of cancelling.

Other forms of communication – such as courtesy phone calls, texts and social media interactions – are less popular overall, but in some groups are still valued. However, external communications generally appear not

to be targeted to specific demographic groups, or to really take account of the fact that individual members will prefer certain forms of communication to others, and often seem to be unrelated to length of membership or visit frequency. The low overall level of external communication, along with this lack of targeted and tailored messages, may explain why such communication is not associated with membership retention.

Based on these findings, our recommendations are as follows:

- Develop a targeted communications strategy designed to maximise opportunities to interact with members, both within and outside of the club.
- Create a conversation culture within the club – implement methods to maximise face-to-face communications.
- Identify preferences – consult with members to understand how and when

they want to be communicated with. If nothing else, work in line with the preferences identified in this article.

- Target emails – ensure emails are only sent to those members who value them.
- Restrict unsolicited phone calls – only call those who want to receive them. •

Melvyn is associate professor of exercise and health at the University of Exeter, where he researches physical activity and population health. Since his landmark retention report in 2001 (Winning the Retention Battle), his research into retention and attrition has led to the development of appropriate measures of retention, attrition and longevity that provide data for operators that can directly inform business decisions. In partnership with TRP, he has published numerous reports into the determinants of membership retention.



The real cost of Free Passes

The leisure industry gives away tens of millions of pounds worth of access in the form of free guest passes.

Thom Cunningham, head of operations at PayasUgym, questions whether this giveaway works, and looks at the alternatives



Are free passes destroying your business?

Each year, the leisure and fitness industry gives away tens of millions of pounds worth of free access to their facilities. Prospective new customers are encouraged to try the facilities, and once through the door, the sell can begin.

But customers have changed, as has the way that they buy. Over the past 3 years operators have reported a significant decline in the volumes of walk-in customers taking a free guest pass. This has been driven by a number of factors, most notably an increase in customers' tendency to browse, compare, and purchase

online. Customers have also become increasingly unwilling to part with personal details, especially in a marketplace that consistently receives poor PR for aggressive sales tactics.

So we surveyed 1,500 customers to find out why free passes weren't working for them, and to better understand how gym operators can attract the right customers to their clubs. The findings highlight an industry addicted to an increasingly ineffective way of marketing to new customers.

Free passes come with strings attached

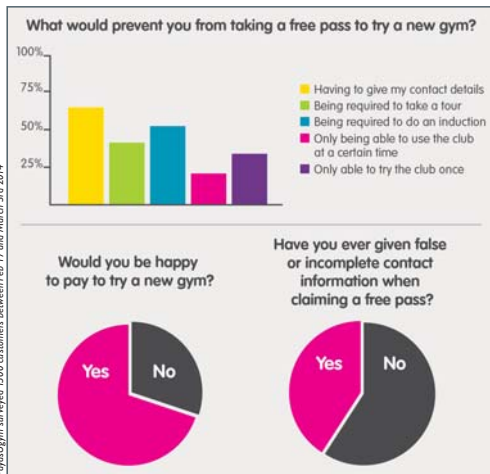
Customers know that the "free" pass being offered is in fact being exchanged for their personal contact details, so that they can be marketed at. Almost 70% of customers pointed to this as being the primary factor in preventing them from taking advantage of a free pass. More worryingly, over a third of people who had used a free pass admitted to giving false or incomplete contact details to avoid being added to marketing lists.

Parting with contact details is not the only thing stopping customers from taking up the offer of a free trip to the gym. Requirements to take inductions, guided tours and restrictions on the times that they can visit are all identified by customers as barriers to trying a new club for the first time.

Free passes keep the best customers out (and let the worst in)

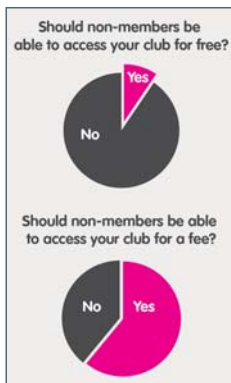
The best customers are those who attach a value to your product or service, and who are prepared to pay for it from the outset. These customers display a much higher purchasing intent, and unsurprisingly a higher propensity to convert to membership on the back of a positive experience at the club.

Of the customers surveyed who had used a free pass in the previous three



In a survey, 80 per cent of those who took a free pass had no intention of joining

*PayasUgym surveyed 1500 customers between Feb 17 and March 3rd 2014



Members don't agree with free passes

months, over 80% said that they had no intention of joining the club, but had taken the pass because it was free.

Free passes come with a very real security risk to operators too, as there is very little control over who is coming in. Strangers visiting the club can do so by simply filling in a short form, and unless proper data validation processes are in place this exposes the operators and existing members to instances of theft or vandalism. Requiring the customer to purchase access with their credit or debit card and receive their access code to their mobile phone eliminates these risks.

Most operators will be familiar with repeat trialists, always on the lookout for the next free pass into the gym. Keeping these customers out can be a challenge as it is reliant on staff recognising the people who come back time and again. At PayasUgym we've recently introduced functionality to flag repeat users to staff on arrival, helping identify customers who really should be signing up when they arrive at your club.

Your existing members don't like free passes

Free passes don't just erode the value of your product in the eyes of prospective customers – existing members resent them and are prone to regard their membership as subsidising free access for non-members. Of the customers surveyed who held a gym membership, 88% said that they did not think that non-members should be able to access their club for free, while 64% felt non-members should be able to access the facility for a fee.



The hidden costs of your free passes quickly add up

Free passes cost more than you think

Quantifying the precise cost of each free pass can be difficult, as the cost of each element will vary significantly from club to club, but the costs broadly fall into three categories.

There are marketing and advertising costs to promote the free passes, such as outreach, local advertising, SEO and online marketing. Then of course there are the actual nuts-and-bolts costs of having that person in your club, such as the wear and tear. Lastly there is the resource in carrying out tours and inductions, and cold calling lists of past free-pass guests. Add the missed revenue opportunity in not having charged them to try the club, and some clubs find their free passes are costing them as much as £40 a time.

The high cost of each free pass only adds to the pressure to convert each visitor to a new member – simply in

order to cover the cost of the campaign. Failure to hit that break-even point makes the activity unsustainable.

So what's the alternative?

By effectively marketing your club to the broadest possible audience, and making a paid-for pass to your facilities available you enable the best customers to come to your gym and give it a try on terms that they are comfortable with.

Don't be afraid

The most common fear I deal with on a day-to-day basis is that a paid-for pass will give people an alternative to committing to membership. The stats simply don't back this up. Going to the gym is inherently a social, community and membership focused activity. Customers derive a strong value from being a member, and it has a powerful motivating effect. Gym goers develop strong and lasting habits around their

Revenue from your trialists funds member acquisition activity



payasUgym delivers new customers to thousands of clubs nationwide, from big-brand chains to specialist and independent operators.

- exercise routine, and equally strong preferences for the facilities they use. Gyms that recruit and retain members well do so because of a combination of great pricing, great facilities and great service. The latter is significantly the most important.

Make money from your trialists, and invest new revenue in winning more customers

Charging a prospective customer to try your club makes financial sense. While your relationship with that customer remains on an informal basis, you need to maximise the revenue you can get from them. Welcome them to your club, let them try it out, and generate revenue from them at the same time.

Additional revenue from casual users and trialists can be used to acquire new members, or to fund incentives and discounts to drive loyalty and renewal. PayasUgym lets our partners capture contact details of customers specifically asking for membership options at their club, and use the revenues they make through pass sales to fund this additional acquisition channel.

Just by charging for something they would have given away for free clubs are able to tap into a highly sophisticated multi-million pound online marketing channel without impacting their marketing spend at all.

Work smarter, not harder

It is important to price a single session pass to keep the volume of visitors up, but the time-wasters out. This ensures that new customers are finding your club sustainably, and contributing, not costing, from the first time they step in the door. You can focus on making each visit the best possible experience of your club, resulting in better conversions and positive customer feedback online.

It pays to work smarter on outbound sales and marketing campaigns too. Hammering increasingly aged lapsed member databases, or purchasing generic lists delivers ever diminishing returns. Clubs have to be targeted – and engage customers when they are active in their purchasing decision. We don't just help clubs identify the right customers to talk to, but when to talk to them – engaging them when their propensity to convert is at its highest.



CASE STUDY

OZONE HEALTH & FITNESS, KINGS CROSS, LONDON

"I stopped all free passes as it seemed pointless to waste time and resources on people that simply wanted to use the club for free. By doing this I have secured a valuable new revenue stream, prevented time wasters, and increased the security of my club as trouble makers simply don't want the hassle of having to make an online payment to buy a pass which requires them to enter their bank details."

Arend Wissing
General Manager

Be seen in the right place

Getting your club and your pass seen is crucial. Having a great website is worthless if nobody makes it there. By investing millions of pounds in online marketing, TV advertising, and national partnerships with household brands like Tesco Clubcard, O2 and HSBC, we drive over four million gym searches through our website each month. Independent customer reviews are 16 times more powerful than the next most effective form of paid advertising in informing purchasing decisions, so we reward people for leaving feedback, letting them tell other people how great your club is.

ABOUT PAYASUGYM

PayasUgym provides lead generation services to over 1700 clubs nationwide. We are the world's largest single source of independent customer reviews, and facilitate over 3.5 million gym searches every month. Our pass

sales and membership enquiries services help gym operators access new customers and grow revenues.

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THE HEART OF THE MATTER

By giving continual feedback, heart rate-based training can motivate members to drive towards their goals – and with it boost retention

When it comes to exercise, willpower only goes so far. According to current thinking, feedback – or more specifically, a continuous cycle of feedback – is most effective in motivating members to maintain an exercise regime.

“A continuous loop of feedback helps people stick to an exercise programme by providing immediate feedback. This increases a person’s awareness of how they are progressing towards their goals, which motivates them to continue,” explains Dr Michael Duncan, a BASES-accredited sport and exercise scientist and reader in sports and exercise at Coventry University in the UK.

The principle is simple: provide members with relevant information about their performance as they exercise and they’re more likely to modify their behaviour to reach their fitness targets. “The data acts as a visual



MYZONE's continuous loop of instant data feedback helps keep exercisers motivated

prompt that focuses people’s attention on their goal, which is the real motivator for exercise,” says Duncan.

Inspiring effort

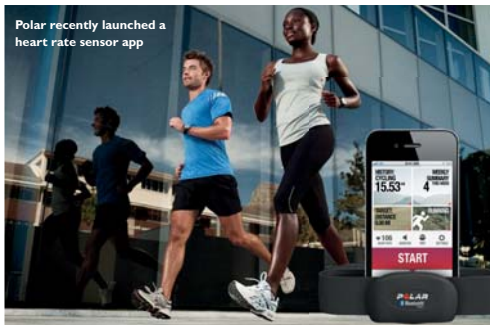
But this positive feedback loop only works if clients have access to accurate

data in real time. And this is where heart rate-based training comes to the fore, with the latest monitoring systems providing accessible and up-to-the-minute analysis of a user’s performance.

The MYZONE system monitors heart rate, intensity (effort) and calories, tracking all physical activity in and outside of the facility. Within a gym or studio environment, feedback is provided in real time: live heart rate data on individuals or a class can be viewed immediately on a screen, with different colours denoting the varying intensities that people are working at. It’s an extremely visual means of translating the key facts about each user’s performance.

All exercise data is then logged to a user cloud; functionalities within the system also allow operators to understand their members’ exercise habits and trainers to track clients’ exercise and nutrition via a free app.

“The focus on rewarding effort through MYZONE Effort Points motivates users to put in the work needed to get the results they want, with the feedback helping them to



Polar recently launched a heart rate sensor app



Heart rate-based training can supercharge a member's exercise results

achieve sustained behaviour change," says Jonathan Monks, UK director at CFM/MYZONE. "The game-based features such as inclusive effort-based challenges and social functionalities for sharing goals, workouts and progress makes exercise more fun and develops a sense of community."

The solution was installed in De Vere's 25 Velocity Health & Fitness Clubs in 2013 and proved so popular that the chain launched a dedicated MYZONE membership this January. The premium package – which includes a MYZONE belt, personal training sessions and a number of challenges – was taken up by around 1,000 people in January alone.

"MYZONE works brilliantly for us. Members can see how a workout on something like the battle ropes in the functional area really ramps up their effort points, which is very rewarding," says Chris Southall, leisure director at De Vere Hotels & Resorts.

Zones for results

Helen Holmes, UK and international trainer for Keiser UK, has long

advocated heart rate-based training as a means of motivating and retaining members. After seven years delivering V0₂ fitness assessments, she developed the Fit4Life heart rate training programme (see p68).

The core of these interval-based sessions is an accurate heart rate zone chart, which enables individuals to find their heart rates and work in the correct zone for their goal, from fat-burning to threshold sessions. Fine-tuned in a number of clubs over the last two years, the class has proved popular with new members as well as cyclists, triathletes and runners.

Meanwhile, Polar launched its new heart rate-based training solution in January of this year. The free app for iPad works with a Polar H7 heart rate sensor to allow instructors to monitor the real-time heart rate and performance data for individuals and classes of up to 40 people. The system provides a visual display of group heart rate data, adding a fun and competitive spirit to workouts. Clubs can tap into this by creating bespoke class and club ▶

SPEEDFLEX

Speedflex uses the Polar Team 2 heart rate monitoring system. Participants are issued with a heart rate band and shown their results – including time spent in each training zone, recovery rate, training load and total Kcal expenditure – at the end of each training session.

"The heart rate system is an integral part of the Speedflex concept. It's an important tool for our personal trainers as they're able to constantly assess performance, knowing whether customers are pushing themselves too hard or too little. The system helps with member retention too – the more feedback we can give customers, the better the service we offer," says Matt Bolam, head of training.

"Heart rate monitors can give a sense of competitiveness, with clients attempting to equal or better their previous training load score. We also use the system to assess heart rate recovery. As clients become fitter, they see a huge improvement in recovery rates between working sets, which they find very motivating," he adds.

Fit4Life

The Fit4Life heart rate-based programme uses interval-based session cards that evolve and progress every four weeks. Sessions focus on improving fat burn, improving and sustaining fitness levels, power and threshold work, and also include group work with racing simulations to keep them fun as well as effective.

"We provide the group with MYZONE heart rate straps and we project individual heart rates on a visual display. As they work through their zones following the Fit4Life class, the display changes colour. Instructors can accurately deliver their sessions and members know they're working in the correct heart rate zone for each interval," says founder Helen Holmes.



Fit4Life uses MYZONE HR monitors

- ▶ challenges to keep their members engaged and motivated.

"The new system makes heart rate training easy," says Liz Shenton, performance and training manager at Polar Electro UK. "Clients don't need to know the science behind it; they can relate to the different coloured training zones."

"The more customers understand their own performance and how to train at the right levels to reach their goals, the more motivated they are and the more likely they are to return."

Training at the right intensity is key to achieving fitness goals and motivating members, agrees Matt Moran, marketing manager at Wattbike. Developed with and for British Cycling, the Wattbike accurately evaluates user performance, measuring power output and pedalling technique as well as heart rate.

"Many gym members gauge the success and intensity of their workout by how much they've sweated, but this can leave them under-achieving or over-trained," says Moran. "The heart is a muscle and needs to be treated and trained as such. By using a heart rate monitor, you can monitor which heart rate zone you're in – but this is only part of the story. We use heart rate



DLL's Orangetheory uses HR monitors to individualise its group training classes

and power to precisely measure the intensity, fatigue and recovery of every session. Educating clients on how to train at the right intensity allows them to have more effective workouts."

Personal, progressive training

The Wattbike is one of the ways David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) is using heart rate training to motivate and support its members in getting results. With its cycling experience suitable for general fitness and weight management through to obtaining the optimum results desired by cycling and triathlon enthusiasts – groups that have long used heart rate-based training – Wattbike is already installed at 20 DLL sites, with plans to roll it out to most of the estate.

DLL has also introduced the Orangetheory group training concept – which uses heart rate monitors to track performance and optimise training during the classes – into its David Lloyd Studio high street model.

"Heart rate-based training individualises group training," says John Williams, health and fitness expertise coach at David Lloyd Leisure.

"Instructors can see exactly how hard each person is working and how they're recovering between sets and intervals, so they can coach them to get the most effective workout. We're seeing some good retention figures as a result."

Heart rate-based training is also useful for proving the value of good personal training, he says. To demonstrate the point, DLL master trainers used heart rate monitors to collect data on clients' performance when they exercised on their own and with personal trainers. Comparing the two sets of data, they found that clients burned around 300 more calories on average when working with a personal trainer. It makes a compelling case for personal training, says Williams.

"Heart rate-based training allows clients to see and feel the difference that exercise makes. Working with a class of informed people is positive on all levels. Clients receive effective, progressive training that's achievable and maintainable, and fitness clubs are rewarded with motivated members," concludes Holmes. And so the cycle of feedback continues. ●



Wattbike: Training at the right intensity

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*MusicWorks survey of 1000 UK businesses, conducted in April 2012



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Going to Market

Julian Leybourne offers his views on management's role in creating effective marketing communications

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/AREK_HALANG

According to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM): "Marketing communications are the tools a company uses to deliver a range of promotional messages to its target markets."

However, this was in 2009 and things have moved on a great deal since then. Although marketing communications are still the tools a company uses to deliver its promotional messages, they're no longer limited to this definition. Marketing communications have evolved, and continue to evolve within a revolution of change where traditional boundaries are blurred. Nowadays, in the era of social media, marketing communications – whether you like it or not – also encompass what your customers are saying about you online.

Our approach has therefore had to evolve in terms of the way we listen to staff, customers and potential prospects – the way we must, today, open up a two-way dialogue to make our audience look, listen and react in a positive and mutually beneficial way.

It's a manager's responsibility to understand this evolution and lead this dialogue. Richard Branson is a great example, in that he reaches out to customers on social media for real-time conversations about how to improve his companies. He uses the full range of social media: blogging, asking questions, responding to comments on Facebook and Twitter to hear what people are saying on a daily basis about each of his businesses and each brand – the good, the bad and everything in between.

At the time of writing, Branson had 3.97 million followers on Twitter, over 4 million followers on LinkedIn – four times more than Barack Obama and over twice as many as Bill Gates – and over half a million monthly visitors to his blog. Over 6 million people had him in their circles on Google Plus and he had 1,078,865 'likes' on Facebook.

By engaging on, say, Facebook or Twitter, you can position your brand to showcase your values in a subtle but

positive way. A quick look at Branson's Twitter feed, for example (right), shows how within a window of less than 24 hours, he touches on core subjects that lie at the heart of the Virgin brand and makes you feel good by association.

However, although social media is the dominant force in marketing today, as Gary Vaynerchuk explained in his keynote speech at the IHRSA Annual Convention in March, the fitness industry is "marketing like it's 2004". It's still using conventional advertising methods like fliers, newspaper advertising and billboards which, he says, are not the way to reach prospective members in 2014 (see <http://llei.sr7a=x6ulr>). These media may remain relevant for some audiences – older people, for example – in which case the key is to fully integrate every element of your campaign so the message, benefit, call to action, tone of voice and brand essence are consistent across the board.

However, Vaynerchuk believes large swathes of the sector are currently using marketing methods that are obsolete when it comes to younger people – who include the gym members of the future – and that clubs need to focus not only on Facebook, but also on up-and-coming social media like Instagram, Vine and Snapchat.

What's your USP?

When it comes to the marketing messages we put out there, the reality is that most things have been said before. The big difference now is that we have a vastly greater range of channels – including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest – that allow for direct communication with staff, members and prospects, giving instant feedback in real time, 24 hours a day. Navigating all the possible channels can be a challenge.

But before you even select your media channels, you must define your message based around your ultimate goal(s). For example, you might want to promote membership benefits, specific time-scaled events or special offers.



Entrepreneur Richard Branson uses social media to touch on core subjects that lie at the heart of the Virgin brand

Alternatively, your aim might be a more complex, long-term underpinning of values to support your brand.

Crucially, managers must realise that having excellent marketing communications is not the total answer. Organisations often repackaging their brand without depth in an attempt to gain customer loyalty, trying to appear different in some way to stand out in a crowded marketplace. But the changes are often superficial – a veneer which does not last.

As Albert Einstein observed: "The definition of insanity is to keep doing the same things and expect a different result." Organisations cannot simply do the same thing, packaged up in a different way with different marketing messages, and expect customers to be won over and see them differently in the long term. Advertising and marketing can't ultimately disguise an inadequate product. Rather, marketing communications should be based on a genuine USP, so the first step is to identify or create a USP that stands out and stacks up.

With this in mind, tempting as it might be to jump on the bandwagon of social media, it's important that organisations don't do this – indeed, don't embark on any form of marketing communication ►

"VAYNERCHUK BELIEVES LARGE SWATHES OF THE SECTOR ARE USING MARKETING METHODS THAT ARE OBSOLETE WHEN IT COMES TO YOUNG PEOPLE – THE GYM MEMBERS OF THE FUTURE"

**“THE SIMPLEST WAY
TO GAIN CUSTOMER
LOYALTY IS TO BE
REALLY HONEST IN
THE WAY YOU TALK
TO THEM – SHOWING
THEM YOU CARE”**

- – without understanding the substance behind their message and the vision of they're trying to achieve.

Who are you talking to?

Once you've worked out what you want to say, the simplest way to gain customer loyalty is to be really honest in the way you talk to customers, communicate with them and deal with them – actually showing them you care, not just telling them. This must happen every minute of every day of every year; the moment you stop doing this, you start to lose customer loyalty.

I've been involved in marketing communications for many years and the key message I've never deviated from is this: clubs must treat all customers as individuals at all stages of the relationship-building process. Once they stop doing this, the customer becomes a number and effective communications will become impossible.

In the era of social media, treating members as individuals has become even more important. Customer databases are still important to identify segments within your membership base, but with social media communicating on a one-to-one basis in real time, it's hard to update your database to a level that will offer sufficient market intelligence.

That said, blogs can be used to encourage an exchange of information based on customer experiences, and can help create a real sense of belonging. They can also naturally start to 'migrate' user groups of your customer base into clearly definable segments such as: elite extremists, recreationalists, weight loss, rehab and newbies.

The majority of prospects should also fall within your definable user groups and, once identified, need to be filtered with an appropriate message or hook that meets their individual needs. This message should then be communicated



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/RACOM

In the social media era, treating people as individuals is more important than ever

to them using a range of methods, including personal contact. You can then start to build a dialogue with them, which should develop into a tangible relationship from which to solicit information to create a personalised offer that matches their needs. This filtering process requires patience and very clear sales and interpersonal skills among those responsible for the process.

Communicate the message

Once you've worked out what you want to say, to whom, and using which media channels, it's time to get creative. Whether on Twitter or in a poster ad, the way you communicate your message must be succinct and very clear.

For example, the most memorable advertising campaign of all time,

according to the Outdoor Media Centre, was Wonderbra's famous 'Hello Boys' campaign that was launched over 20 years ago and still stimulates discussion and controversy despite comprising just two words and one image.

The designers knew they had less than three seconds to capture attention, create desire and make people want to know more; given the proliferation of marketing messages hitting us every day thanks to the likes of social media, we'd be lucky to have that long today. As Vaynerchuk said at IHRSA: "We're living in the biggest cultural shift of all time. You need to get people's attention in the noisiest world we've ever been in."

An uncluttered approach also helps ensure consumers will spot 'signposts' to access further information should ►

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SOCIAL MEDIA DOS AND DON'TS

DO

- Be clear of the message and values you're trying to convey.
- Have a clear goal of how you're trying to communicate – for example, one-way message or two-way dialogue – and treat all your customers with respect.
- Be prepared to think on your feet, but make sure you also think properly before committing your message online.
- Be clear on how you intend to use social media to strengthen your knowledge about customer likes and dislikes.
- Ensure all staff are involved, but have 'social media champions' who can spearhead your efforts and bring new ideas to the table.
- Make sure you have clear social media protocols that everyone understands and adheres to – social media suicide is terminal!
- Keep the dialogue alive and healthy – lapses in social media send out the wrong messages to your followers.
- Bounce ideas off your followers – don't be afraid to ask them what they think, even though you may not always like the answer.
- Try out novel ways to illustrate your point of view using images, photos and video.
- Integrate your social media campaign into your other communication channels, such as your website.

DON'T

- Hard sell or bombard your followers with junk messages.
- Be boring – but do keep your message sincere. Avoid use of bad language, discriminatory language, rudeness or cheap jokes.
- Use internal buzzwords or non-obvious abbreviations.
- Forget to check your competitors' social media streams for ideas.
- Be afraid to tackle detractors, since these could be your competitors in disguise.
- Ignore followers or fail to meet a commitment you've made.
- Dismiss social media as just a passing fad.



Clubs must recruit and train members of staff who embody the company ethos

"CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS AREN'T THE ONLY KEY AUDIENCES FOR MARKETING – STAFF ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT"

- they require it – a telephone number, website, social media source or a venue.

Importance of staff

But customers and prospects aren't the only key audiences for marketing communications. If health club managers are serious about delivering great customer service, they must realise that staff are equally important: every single member of staff has to understand and buy into the core values of the company, with a common culture and belief system established in the workplace based on kindness, trust, mutual support and a desire to create great customer experiences. Without this, all marketing messages simply become insincere words repeated from staff member to staff member.

Sadly, however, gym staff as an audience are all too often neglected in a marketing strategy, which must begin with recruiting the right people to represent the brand in the first place. In reality, management fails to recruit the right people, often fails to train the right people, and when they do train them, they often fail to source the best type of training for them and almost certainly fail to measure the actual effectiveness of this training.

If we want staff to communicate our marketing message with customers, the process must start with senior executives of the company. People have to be recruited who embody the

company ethos; they have to be trained; and every single member of staff has to understand and be able to communicate the message that management has set out for the company.

Leading from the front

Having great leadership is therefore key to creating world-class marketing and marketing communications. These need to be strategically planned into a campaign where every element supports the same consistent message, and where all staff have bought into the vision.

Keeping your message and your values consistent is hard, but managers must understand that – if they fail to do this – customers will lose faith in the brand and spend elsewhere. ●

Julian Leybourne, FCIM FCIMSPA (Chartered), is CEO of ICON TRAINING. He has a masters

degree in strategic marketing and over 40 years' experience in the management of sport and physical activity across the voluntary, public and private sectors. He is a former chair of the Wales Board of Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity, is engaged with CIM as a chartered marketer, and is a judge on the Wales Marketing Awards. He advises CIMSPA on education strategies in the UK as a member of the board of trustees.

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CLIENT SUPPORT (PART ONE)

Whether it's pre-sales assistance, staff training, or a complete 'no-results, no-fee' package, Alliance has a bespoke solution for all businesses, says head of client support, Paul Woodford

What's the scope of Alliance Leisure's client support?

We offer complete solutions for leisure sites to help drive their business forward. We might work with them on increasing sales, retention or customer service – anything that helps them to boost revenues, improve performance and increase customer satisfaction.

What we really excel at is changing culture within an organisation – showing them how to drive that change, starting with their staff, and embedding proven systems, processes and techniques.

Do you have to be an existing Alliance customer to benefit from this help?

No, a few years ago these services were only available to the facilities we'd built or refurbished, but now we work with any business that needs our help.

We mostly work with local authority and leisure trust sites, but also some private businesses, in a wide variety of leisure areas such as fitness, bowling, spa, high ropes, swimming and toning centres, etc. We also work with some of the large hotels chains such as Holiday Inn and Village Hotels.

Follow the series

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3. Viability assessment & full feasibility
4. Site investigation
5. Fixed price contracts
6. Overseeing the building work
7. Ordering phase
8. Client support (part 1)
9. Client support (part 2)

So how do you begin to change the culture of an organisation?

We work with a lot of organisations in the public sector that don't really have any kind of brand identity. They might have a nicely-designed logo which they think is their brand, but true brand identity is what's coursing through the veins of their staff, and how those staff feel about the organisation.

Motivation and driving income can be a problem in facilities where there are a lot of part-time workers, but we help to train all staff, empower them with knowledge and skills, get them passionate about what they do, get

them passionate about selling – and that means ALL staff. Everyone needs to be involved in selling to customers, often in ways they don't even realise is selling.

In fact we hardly ever use the word 'selling' when training our clients.

Can you explain the process that you take businesses through?

After we've looked at overall branding and the strategic vision with senior management, we move onto training. There's a base level training that all staff must complete, followed by an intermediate level where key members are trained in lead generation.

We often find through this process that unexpected staff members emerge as really enthusiastic sales people, with the potential to become true brand ambassadors for the company.

While we can deliver motivational one-off training days, they don't really change anything. We prefer to work on longer-term packages with clients so their culture really can transform.

What follows the Alliance training stage?

We then focus on marketing and what the business specifically needs to achieve. Foundation marketing is quite general – such as leaflet distribution, while targeted marketing is where we start to drill down into a site's data – for example what Mosaic profiles should they be looking to attract?

With some offers, like Toning Suites, there's a very clear demographic and we know exactly how to tailor marketing literature so that it talks to these users. With our pinpoint marketing, we'll purchase data relevant to the site.

What's the next step?

Retention, which is a really key area for all fitness and membership-based business, and tends to cause them real



The fitness team at Coventry Sports & Leisure were also trained in customer service



Alliance has helped the Coventry leisure site almost double its members

CASE STUDY – Boosting numbers for Coventry Sports & Leisure Centre

Alliance started working with Coventry Sports & Leisure Centre in January 2010, as the facility was on a dramatic slide in terms of members and income. The centre had just finished a three-year contract with another leisure client support company, and were

sceptical that another partnership would work.

Alliance took the risk, believed in its approach and set a plan to empower the whole team. It embedded all of its systems and techniques and focused on the duty manager team to support, mentor and coach

the sales effort. Woodford says: "We transformed the sales and marketing approach and soon turned the decline into growth. We also worked with the fitness team to ensure the customer experience was rewarding, motivating and helped achieve results.

"Membership numbers were just under 1500 when we started, now they're at 2950, a 97 per cent increase! And we achieved these numbers in an environment where one of the biggest budget operator has opened just two minutes away."

concern. Staff are taught to 'educate, motivate and inspire' customers.

It's all about ensuring new joiners experience a great and varied journey – and we've developed targeted training for different areas. For example, we have a fitness journey, swim journey, extreme skate park journey, spa journey, etc. Never pigeonhole new members into a single activity, because if they engage in multiple journeys, they'll stay with you for longer. To complement this training, we'll often fund retention software (we work closely with The Retention People) as part of our offer.

Isn't this type of intervention too costly for many facilities?

Many of the businesses we work with don't have a big sales team or

marketing or training budget – but they don't necessarily need those things to achieve successful income generation. It's about making the most of the staff that they have – and we show them exactly how to do that.

We even offer a 'No Risk, Income Share' option where we give a company all of our products and people, pledge to protect their current level of income – and we only get paid if we actually make a profit for them. This approach makes us really unique in the marketplace [read more about this business model in next month's article].

To give an example of this, three years ago we started working with Cardiff Council, which urgently needed to increase its fitness and membership

income. We pledged to protect its current income plus a further 10 per cent growth before we started taking any commission.

Overall the council's 11 leisure sites are currently performing 40 per cent higher than when we started working with them three years ago. The council could never have achieved that kind of figure on its own, so our intervention represents the true essence of partnership.

Also, we've never failed to exceed our targets with any of our clients. ●

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GOOD AS NEW

The standard of refurbished and remanufactured equipment is now so high that it gives new kit a run for its money. Health Club Management speaks to some happy customers



Health and fitness facilities are able to satisfy discerning members with the ever-improving quality of refurbished kit

BRIGHT & APPEALING

Supplier: Physique Sports

Client: Failsworth Sports Centre, Failsworth, UK

Failsworth Sports Centre is one of 14 sports centres run by leisure trust Oldham Community Leisure (OCL). The site has a gym, pool, dance studio and refreshments lounge. A recent refurbishment has seen the addition of a teen gym.



The brightly-coloured kit is a hit with teenagers

THE BRIEF

Physique Sports was given the remit of creating a gym that teenagers would want to visit, therefore staying off the streets.

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

"The remanufactured equipment we supplied was bespoke, to fit in with the vibrant colour scheme of the gym," says Daniel Jones, sales director at Physique Sports. "The new kit is bright and modern, which is key to attracting younger gym-goers. The gym is now considered a cool place for all ages to go."

The project has been a great success, with memberships rising since the refurb, adds OCL facilities manager Paul Watson.

NEW PARTNERSHIP

Supplier: ServiceSport

Client: Tandridge Leisure Centre, Oxted, UK

Tandridge Leisure Centre offers a mixed gym for the community – run by Tandridge Trust, Surrey.

THE BRIEF

Tandridge Trust wanted to update its facility with reliable, robust and aesthetically pleasing equipment; existing machines were traded in to allow it to meet its budget. ServiceSport supplied remanufactured Life Fitness Classic Renew cross-trainers and Life Fitness Summit Trainers. All Classic Renew equipment meets health and safety and environmental European legislation.



ServiceSport has teamed up with Life Fitness

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

Susie Marriott, commercial director of ServiceSport, says it's one of the first installations for ServiceSport as a licensed remanufacturer for Life Fitness. "Together we've developed an approved process for remanufacture, which amounts to 80 per cent of the parts being replaced with new parts," she says. ▶

► COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION

Supplier: GymKit UK

Client: Thamesmead Gym, London, UK

This 370sq m (4,000sq ft), 30-year-old gym in south London was taken over 11 years ago by head coach Kaylan Townsend. As well as offering a mainstream gym, one of the club's specialities is outreach work and it's involved with many disability projects, GP referrals, healthcare and rehabilitation, and working with youths and ex-offenders. Many ex-offenders have now turned their lives around and become fully qualified personal trainers.

THE BRIEF

The club wanted good, branded equipment on a tight budget, with a full installation service and warranty. GymKit provided a full range of refurbished Precor cardio equipment and Technogym strength equipment, alongside Hammer Strength plate-loaded machines and fitness accessories including bench and weights.

Townsend says: "The EasyLine Circuits sourced by GymKit have proved an asset to our disability project and rehabilitation work. GymKit manages to source whatever we want, when we want it, providing us with complete circuits. In a previous installation, they even managed to source the Cybex plate-loaded circuit for us – that was like gold-dust for us!"

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

Howard Braband, director of GymKit UK, says the company is proud to work with this gym, which supports a local community with its health and fitness needs. "The company has used us many times now, and to be part of such an important facility is a great honour," he says.



The community-focused gym had a tight budget

LOOKS LIKE NEW

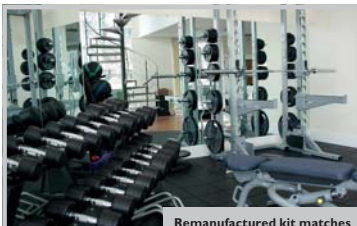
Supplier: Fit4Sale

Client: Her Total Fitness, Ohio, US

Her Total Fitness is a 1,115sq m (12,000sq ft) women's only club in Ohio, which opened in March 2014 offering a gym, group exercise and cycling classes, PT, massage and on-site childcare.

THE BRIEF

Co-owner Brandy Bates wanted high quality equipment that would look high-end, brand new and appealing to the female



Remanufactured kit matches the studio's hi-spec interior

SLEEK & CHIC

Supplier: Technogym

Client: Fred's Personal Training, London, UK

Founded by personal trainer Fred Fergé, Fred's Personal Training is an exclusive private studio in south London, which provides a range of one-to-one personal training, nutrition and pre and post-natal fitness services.

THE BRIEF

Fergé wanted to give the five-year-old studio a facelift by installing new equipment, keeping the studio on par with the best in the market. With affluent and discerning customers, he wanted premium equipment that would exceed customer expectations in functionality, appearance and feel.

Technogym provided a blend of Still Novo CV equipment – its remanufactured range, including Excite+ Run, Recline and Synchro – alongside Arke kit for functional training, as well as a variety of strength equipment, including an Olympic Half Rack. "The state-of-the-art design and functionality of Technogym's equipment perfectly suits our ethos, underlined by a quality assurance that provides us with peace of mind," says Fergé.

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

The equipment was a seamless fit for the sleek environment of the studio, fulfilling both form and functionality requirements. There has been positive feedback from both owner and trainers, reporting that prospects have been impressed by the look and feel of the equipment and that clients find the machines user-friendly.

client base. Fit4Sale sourced a mixture of remanufactured Life Fitness and Precor equipment.

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

"This was a nice clean deal for Fit4Sale, as it was mainly all the more current models of both strength and CV," says director Nick Pugh. "We were under pressure to meet the client's budget, the demand for high quality, as well as their deadline for the grand opening – and we delivered on this. We made sure the majority of the equipment matched in the colour of the frames, which we did in platinum, with black upholstery. This gave the facility a very clean look."



Ex-pro boxer Brian Magee (above) needed the kit to withstand heavy use by sports people, but to appeal to general users too

CELEBRITY APPEAL

Supplier: Pulse

Client: Magee Health and Fitness, Belfast, Northern Ireland

Launched last January by ex-professional boxer Brian Magee, this independent club offers a fitness suite, classes, specialist boxing training and PT. It has a loyal membership base of 300, including sports professionals and a handful of celebrities.

THE BRIEF

Magee wanted to source a mix of durable CV, resistance and free weights equipment that would withstand pounding and the needs of professional sports people, while not being too intimidating to the general public.

Pulse supplied a range of refurbished CV, resistance and free weights to the value of £40,000. Pulse Resale equipment is assessed for performance and reliability and a full service history is provided for most resale equipment.

Magee comments: "I chose Pulse as they were able to provide a complete, hassle-free, value for money solution of equipment supply, service and maintenance contract."

WHY THE PROJECT STANDS OUT

"Pulse was delighted to be associated with someone with such a reputation in the sporting world," says Linda Forster, marketing manager for Pulse. "As an amateur, Magee competed for Ireland in the middleweight division in the 1996 summer Olympics. As a professional, he won the European WBA, the IBO and British super middleweight titles." ●



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FULLY FUNCTIONAL

We round up some of the latest product news and launches in the area of functional training

ORIGIN ORIGINALS

Origin Athletic is a specialist fitness brand launched by Anytime Leisure in January 2014 to cater for the fast-growing functional, free weight and studio training sector.

Anytime Leisure has designed, developed and tested the range over the last 12 months with a view to providing a premium, robust, reliable product offering backed up by extensive stock and service support based in the UK.

The range for 2014 includes an extensive free weight range, strength and conditioning, gym accessories, studio accessories and a wide range of floor mats, as well as functional rigs and power racks.

Anytime has also formalised a UK distribution agreement with Rephouse to hold extensive stock of the full specialist range, from CrossFit tiles, through strength and conditioning, to specialist colours of rubber functional flooring. Bespoke designs are available.

Over the next 12 months there will be a number of key additions to the range, as well as additional support in the areas of functional design, training and branding.

Star Trac has signed a deal to supply Origin to its UK customers.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
Anytime Leisure

ABSOLUTELY BRANDED

Functional equipment specialist Absolute Performance has seen a huge growth in the number of facilities wanting customised branding, says managing director Tony Buchanan. As a result, the company has put even more focus on its ability to deliver this to a high standard, with the most recent installation being the England Rugby high performance training centre.

At this newly installed centre, dumbbells carry the England rose, plates and plyoboxes are all branded with 'England Rugby', and machines such as benches and power racks are all red and white.

"When it comes to bespoke branding, really anything can be done, from dumbbells and plyoboxes to turf for sled runs and functional zone flooring, which can carry a brand name, colour scheme and even messaging," says Buchanan.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
Absolute

'KAREN' COMES TO GYM FLOORS

Physical Company has added the Wall Ball to its functional kit range. Larger than an average medicine ball, Wall Ball is just as tough but slightly softer, making it perfect for throwing and catching-based exercises.

Wall Balls are most commonly used in the CrossFit exercise known as 'Karen' – a squat-throw and catch combination performed continuously. Operators can now bring the essence of CrossFit to the gym floor and enhance the functional training experience for members, with the ball available in 10 sizes: 1kg–10kg.

The Wall Ball is designed to be a fun way for members to add resistance to a range of core, upper and lower body functional exercises. It's also an excellent tool for personal trainers who wish to add a partner element to their clients' workouts.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
Physical Company

OUTDOOR OFFERING

Life Fitness has launched SYNRGY BlueSky, an extension of its SYNRGY360 small group training system designed specifically for outdoor use. SYNRGY BlueSky offers 12 bodyweight training stations for exercisers of all abilities, and comes in 12 colour options.

It has been designed to combine the benefits of outdoor exercise – which is proven to enhance an exerciser's mood and energy – with small group training. It's engineered to meet outdoor safety standards, withstand harsh weather conditions and provide a wide range of customisable configurations to fit a variety of spaces and exercisers.

Stations can be used separately in a circuit, or combined to create more consolidated training spaces. A QR code on each station gives access to exercise tutorials.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
Life Fitness



Jordan has introduced five new functional rehab training courses

ADDRESSING FUNCTIONAL IMBALANCES

Jordan Training Academy has launched five new courses designed to bridge the gap between medical and alternative healthcare intervention and injury prevention, by teaching healthcare and fitness professionals to identify, assess and train certain functional imbalances.

The Functional Rehabilitative Training courses were designed with clients and

patients in mind, bridging the gap between medical knowledge and exercise expertise.

Senior tutor Ben Boulter says the courses are designed "to create a new generation of professionals focused on treating and preventing acute biomechanical pain and dysfunction with the use of exercise in conjunction with continuing professional manual care".

The five courses must be taken in order, as follows: Posture & Muscular Control, Core Stability & Torsional Control, Motor Pattern Assessment, Functional Gait Analysis, and Training Dysfunction & Imbalance.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Jordan

FUNCTIONAL GROUP EXERCISE

FitPro has launched a new group exercise concept for its ViPR functional training product.

ViPR Group Fitness adopts the already well-established Loaded Movement Training workout, but in a new 30- to 45-minute group exercise format. The first two programmes are ViPR 3D, a pre-choreographed, music-based class, and ViPR Athletic, for higher intensity.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

FitPro

HARD CORE TRAINING

GRAVITY UK has introduced Total Gym Core Trainer. This single station unit is designed to train the entire core, as well as the pelvis, back, hips and shoulders to improve functional strength, enhance abdominal definition and improve overall stability of the trunk.

The easy to use piece of equipment facilitates a range of core exercises. Built on an incline, the core trainer makes it easy to begin at the user's ability level and progress as required. The user can make a plank more dynamic and increase difficulty by moving the lower body and foot position, for example, or by bringing the knees to the chest to perform a 'Scrunch'.

Total Gym Core Trainer is simple and safe to use, with an intuitive, non-intimidating appearance, and can be given a fixed, designated position on the gym floor.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

GRAVITY

GETTING TIYR

The Escape TIYR has been designed to maintain the rawness of flipping strongman tyres, and delivers all the original fitness challenges, but with none of the downsides of scrap tyres. The TIYR is soft but strong and very tough – like the 'real' thing.

Ergonomically designed handles allow for lifting, carrying and flipping while simultaneously creating anchor points for attachments like ropes, speed resistors and power bands for an even greater variety of functional workouts.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Escape

SUPPLIER SHOWCASE

We take a look at recent installations by Cybex and Legend

Lovingly Restored

Client: Kinesis Gym and Fitness Centre, London, UK
Supplier: Cybex International UK

A former 1930s Art Deco cinema in Eltham, south-east London, has been given a new lease of life and transformed into a 860sq m (9,000sq ft) fitness facility. Having stood derelict since closing in 2000, the building is now home to Kinesis Gym and Fitness Centre, a state-of-the-art facility comprising a split-level gym, fitness studio, treatment room and café.

First opened in 1936, the Coronet cinema has been a landmark in the surrounding area for almost 70 years. A target for vandalism since its closure, the building was voted upon by Greenwich councillors, who granted permission for the site to be turned into a vibrant mixed-use development.

Behind the renovation is the Suggars family, whose roots lie in Eltham and whose vision it was to restore many of the building's original features, working in conjunction with English Heritage. These included a rounded projecting glass staircase tower, Art Deco moulds and windows, lighting and 1930s-style reception and café.

The gym houses over 60 pieces of cardio and resistance equipment

from Cybex, including VR3 and Eagle selectorised strength equipment with customised upholstery, the Bravo Functional Training System, Big Iron series of racks and benches and plate-loaded and free weights equipment.

Cardio equipment includes Cybex 770T treadmills and 770C and 770R bikes incorporating E3 View

entertainment consoles. Cybex's Total Body and Lower Body Arc Trainers were also installed. A large free weights and functional training area was equipped by Jordan Fitness.

Dan Suggars, manager of Kinesis Gym and Fitness Centre and a personal trainer, says: "I was hugely impressed with Cybex right from the start, not only because of the quality of the equipment and the science and research behind each piece, but also by the high levels of service and support provided."

"Seminars run by Cybex's master trainers have benefited my staff greatly, while the design and activation of a number of marketing campaigns have supported our sales strategy and helped us to not only reach but exceed our original membership targets."

Tony Vaughan, Cybex regional sales manager, says: "The gym is a great addition to the community, and the work Dan and his family have undertaken to restore the building has been fantastic. It's an inspirational and unique environment in which to train."

Details: www.cybexintl.com



The gym is housed in a local 1930s landmark, formerly the Coronet cinema



The building's Art Deco reception was restored with the help of English Heritage

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a high intensity workout.

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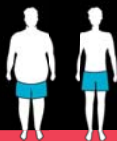
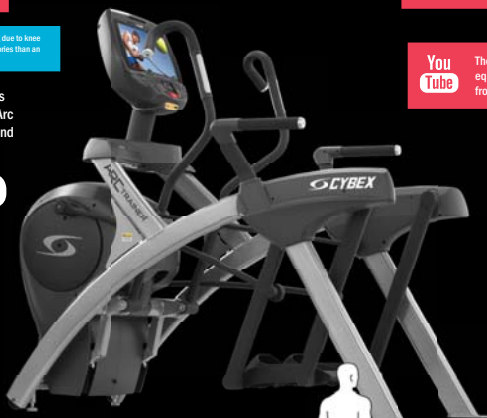
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had arc trainers and I loved them, no
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it's tough on the fat.

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elliptical. Love it!

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They can burn some serious calories with the
settings...basically a variation on standard ell
machines but with a greater range of motion

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522 calories... I love
this machine

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Legend spent three full days training staff on the new system, so they could start using it from a position of confidence

Seamless Integration

Client: Inverclyde Leisure, Scotland
Supplier: Legend

Scottish leisure trust Inverclyde Leisure has implemented the Legend leisure management solution across its 13 Renfrewshire sites.

The new system went live on 4 March 2014, incorporating Legend's front of house, back office and online solutions, including web bookings, smartphone apps and integrated social media marketing, as well as Legend's new tablet-based 'sports courses' solution. The implementation was completed in less than three months.

The next phase, already underway, includes Legend's Powerhouse energy management software and LegendFM facilities management software.

Inverclyde Leisure selected Legend to improve the customer experience and bring operational efficiencies to leisure services in its 13 sites. "Our previous system was no longer fit for purpose given the aims of our overall customer service strategy, which is based on making use of the web," says Kieron Vango, CEO of Inverclyde Leisure. "We chose Legend because it offered the best price for the functionality available, was highly intuitive in terms of usability, and presented us with a clear roadmap for future innovation."

Legend's team scheduled weekly project management meetings and

daily calls, providing additional support when required. Says Vango: "We've been impressed by Legend's support and attention to detail. Early indications are very positive with customers, staff and management."

The implementation included: the migration of 6,000 member records from the previous on-site system to Legend's cloud-based solution; training for 105 staff across Inverclyde's 13 sites; and a rationalisation of the trust's membership options, cutting these down from more than 60 to just 15.

"The move to Legend presented us with a great opportunity for a complete review. It allowed us to take a helicopter view of how we'd been managing this aspect of the business and make it more effective. This exercise alone has been hugely valuable," adds Vango.

"However, it was really in the areas of project management and on-site training that Legend excelled. They truly acted as an extension of the team here, ensuring there was a mutual understanding of what we wanted to achieve."

Legend conducted three full days of staff training using three trainers, even providing 4.00pm to 9.00pm evening



Inverclyde Leisure chose Legend to bring operational efficiencies to its 13 sites

training for some staff, as well as additional sessions on an ad hoc basis for key staff members who needed additional mentoring.

"This has been really important," Vango comments. "Our staff work seven days a week, from 6.00am to 9.00pm, so Legend's flexibility in the training meant nobody missed out and all our staff have started using the system from a position of confidence. It's been instrumental in the seamless go-live."

"We're already seeing a strong impact in the first month. Customers are benefiting from the web booking and smartphone functions, while staff are positive about the usability and speed of the system. This has made the front of house process faster and has enabled us focus on customer service."

"We're also expecting the depth of reporting to help us find further areas in which we might improve the business."

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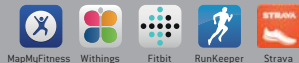
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