

health club management

SEPTEMBER 2010

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INTERVIEW

STEVE LEWIS & JON WILLIAMS

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at The Marlow Club



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easy brand arrives



The budget health club sector has a new entrant this month – Fore Fitness – which has announced a brand licensing agreement with easyGroup IP Licensing Ltd that will enable it to develop, operate and market easyGym budget health clubs. Fore Fitness specialises in investments that introduce low-cost business models into established sectors, and the partnership will include developments in the UK and various other countries.

The new business comes to market relatively late. There are already 10 private sector operators in the budget space in the UK, in addition to a handful of trusts that have either launched or converted to this model. Fore Fitness hopes the 'easy' name will help the new venture to leapfrog the competition.

Early fears about low-cost clubs creating issues for the wider health club industry by allowing unsupervised workouts and poor service have – so far – proven unfounded. These clubs seem to be establishing clear water between themselves and more traditional clubs via points of difference in the use of technology and management practice which, although often small, are very meaningful.

In a low-cost club, staff are freed up from the reception desk by the lack of cash on-site and the use of automated check-in, meaning they can walk the gym floor and look after customers

Take staffing for example. In a low-cost club, staff are freed up from the reception desk by the lack of cash on-site and the use of automated check-in, meaning they can walk the gym floor, looking after customers and giving advice. Some low-cost operators even claim to be able to give better service this way. In the *2010 UK Low-Cost Gym Sector Report* (Oxygen Consulting), Kenny McAndrew, CEO of FitSpace, says his clubs have personal trainers certified to REPs Level 3 to run every single member induction – something he claims few, if any, other operators can match.

So 'cheap' doesn't have to mean 'inferior'.

The report says: "Key to the success of low-cost business is the philosophy to do less; what remains is done obsessively well. A fundamental error is made if someone interprets 'low-cost' as 'cheap'."

The danger for traditional operators lies in overestimating the value of their own services, while underestimating the quality of service achieved by low-cost clubs which are smarter with their staffing.

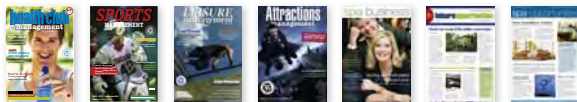
The German market serves as a predictor of what may be to come. From a standing start in 1997, operator McFit – creator of the low-cost health club concept – has grown to a membership of 850,000 and inspired a raft of imitators which now have the majority of the market, with 53 per cent between them. Growth in traditional operator companies over this time has been largely non-existent.

The *2010 UK Low-Cost Gym Sector Report* says it's been necessary to educate consumers about the new model but that once they understand it, they're enthusiastic adopters. Most importantly, low-cost clubs which don't have contracts are reporting attrition levels equal to or better than industry averages.

None of this would be possible without the internet though. The power of online membership management is highlighted as it enables savings, easy upselling and regular contact by email – something which seems obvious, but few traditional clubs achieve. Clubs are also developing their own apps, offering fly-through club tours, using back-end systems that track drop-outs and offering progress tracking functionality for members, making the internet the machine that's powering the new model.

Liz Terry, editor

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buyers' guide

For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to p110



write to reply



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



Nuffield Health's MD praises the growing link between health and fitness

revolutionising the relationship between health and fitness

I was delighted to see the feature, 'Mending Members' (*HCM* July 10), recognising the potential of pre-hab and rehab for individuals suffering from musculo-skeletal and cardiac problems, and acknowledging that Nuffield Health is leading the way in providing these services within its centres.

With its strong clinical credentials, Nuffield Health is very aware of the positive impact that structured, supported exercise can have for individuals suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity, or musculo-skeletal complaints. As a result, we've trained more than 200 wellbeing advisors as experts in wellbeing as well as fitness, resulting in a holistic approach to health. We now have physios in more than half of our centres, providing sports injury rehabilitation and physio-pilates classes,

as well as being on-hand to provide expert help for those suffering minor injuries while exercising.

Our Recovery Plus rehab programme, currently running at seven of our centres, is revolutionising how surgeons, physios and fitness advisers work together to improve the outcome for the patient, both in terms of speed and degree of recovery; although still in pilot, we're seeing incredibly positive results.

The link between health and fitness has always been known, but few fitness chains have embraced the possibilities because of their lack of clinical expertise; at Nuffield Health, our robust clinical audit and governance processes mean we're confident in our programmes and the benefits afforded to our members.

nick burrows
md, nuffield health, fitness & wellbeing

physical activity: a vital role in kids' obesity prevention

My initial amusement turned to anger when I read the news story "Exercise 'no answer' to obesity" (*HCM* Aug 10, p9). At a time when public funding and resources are being cut, this type of poorly presented research may give providers an excuse to justify dropping essential preventative physical activity measures.

The study implied that physical inactivity appears to be the result of fitness, instead of its cause, and that doing a variety of physical activity did not lead to any changes in fitness. This is very confusing and indeed misleading. Physical activity is not the only solution to the obesity epidemic; indeed, it's widely accepted that nutrition plays the dominant role in the energy balance. However, implying that it has no impact on childhood obesity is ridiculous; there's a plethora of research that backs up the positive effects of promoting physical activity interventions.

As a paediatric exercise scientist who was on the NICE committee that produced NHS physical activity guidelines, I understand about the development of adolescents. The importance of the holistic approach – a healthy lifestyle, including but not exclusively focused on physical activity – should not be undervalued. By instilling this commitment early and as a customary part of everyday life, it's more likely to carry on into adult life, breaking the cycle of childhood obesity for future generations.

jonathan williams
ceo, shokk

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The claim that exercise doesn't cure obesity riled SHOKK's CEO

every gym needs the right equipment.



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Cadbury

in brief...

council reveals £52m cost of leisure scheme

A £13.3m leisure complex in Wolverhampton, which opened in December 2006, is set to cost local taxpayers more than £52m by the time the council completes repayments. Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre – which offers a 140-station gym, a six-lane, 25m swimming pool and a leisure pool – was built under a private finance initiative (PFI) and is located in Wednesfield. The scheme was led by Wolverhampton City Council in partnership with DC Leisure, which secured the contract to operate the venue for a 30-year period ending 31 October 2036.

green credentials for leisure connection

Leisure management company Leisure Connection has been awarded the Carbon Trust Standard after cutting its carbon emissions by 4 per cent. The company's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint included a scheme at Downham Leisure Centre in Lewisham, which saw it invest £25,000 in pool covers in March of this year. The move contributed towards an 8 per cent reduction in gas consumption.

The Carbon Trust Standard is one of the first carbon awards that requires an organisation to measure, manage and reduce carbon emissions and make real reductions year-on-year. Organisations are rewarded for actions they've taken to cut carbon across their operations.

december launch for dll exeter

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has revealed that its new flagship £11m health and fitness club at Sandy Park in Exeter, Devon, is scheduled to open to the public on 13 December 2010.

Construction work at the 5,635sq m (60,650sq ft) complex commenced earlier this year, with facilities set to include a 25 x 12m indoor swimming pool, a 20 x 8m outdoor pool, three indoor tennis courts and five outdoor tennis courts.

The DLL club, which will be located adjacent to Exeter Chiefs' rugby ground, will also include a 1,198sq m (12,900sq ft) fitness area incorporating a range of CV and resistance machines, free weights and Power Plates.

All of the centre's gym instructors will be qualified to Level 2 standards and will be included on the Register of Exercise Professionals, while specialist tennis and swimming programmes will also be run for members.

Greg Fanning, general manager of the club, says: "As well as introducing leisure facilities to the area, the club will also create more than 80 jobs, most of which will be filled by local people."



The new flagship Exeter club is currently under construction

losses at fitness first

Despite an increase in revenue, Fitness First posted a £241.6m loss

Privately-owned health club operator Fitness First has reported a £241.6m loss for the year ending 31 October 2009 after writing down the value of its European division.

Chief executive Colin Waggett told *The Daily Telegraph* that the company opted to "write down all the goodwill in the business", amounting to £105m. The firm's revenues, however, actually increased to £670.3m.

Despite posting losses, which increased from the £124m the group suffered during the previous year, the operator is still believed to be eyeing up an initial public offering on the London Stock Exchange.

essex uni gets new gym facility

Archial Architects has completed a £640,000 refurbishment and gym extension at the University of Essex in Colchester. The project is part of a larger £1.4m upgrade of the facility.

The new two-storey extension to the sports centre's existing gym marks the completion of the first stage of the University's Strategic Sports Development Plan.

The project has involved the installation of a new 130-station fitness suite on the ground floor, while facilities on the first floor now include two refurbished activity studios, three individual offices, a meeting room and an administration area.

Archial was appointed to create a masterplan for the future development of leisure on the campus in 2007.



Project involves two-storey extension



The group plans to open 24 new sites across the UK over the next two years

pure gym opens in smethwick

Budget club operator Pure Gym has opened its latest site, situated in Smethwick, West Midlands.

Located at the Windmill Shopping Centre and open 24 hours a day, the club opened its doors at the end of August.

The Smethwick gym is fully air conditioned and includes a wide range of CV, strength and circuit equipment, as well as a variety of group exercise classes for an additional fee. The new fitness club is also one of the first in Birmingham to offer bodycore vibration training platforms.

The Pure Gym concept is based on not having traditional membership contracts but rather offering users

full access for a £15 monthly payment and a £20 joining fee.

Peter Roberts, chief executive of Pure Gym, explains: "In the current economic climate, people from all walks of life are watching their budgets; we're offering a package to customers at a competitive and affordable price, with the added bonus of 24-hour access, seven days a week."

Pure Gym now operates sites in Wolverhampton, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Earlier this year, the company confirmed plans to open 24 new sites across the UK over the next two years, following a £10m investment in the company.

slm retains stratford operator contract

Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) has retained its contract with Stratford District Council for the operation of the four leisure centres in the area: Stratford, Shipston, Studley and Southam.

SLM beat off competition from Parkwood, Nuffield and Wychavon Leisure to win the seven-year contract with a three-year extension.

A spokesperson says: "This marks the start of an exciting period for the Stratford contract, with a major

refurbishment of the fitness suite at the Stratford leisure and visitor centre starting imminently.

"The contract has also created the role of active communities manager – a position with responsibility for driving and developing the Everyone Active brand [SLM's fitness brand] in the contract and for developing greater links with Stratford District Council."

Earlier this year, SLM completed a £23m refurbishment programme at Watford Woodside Leisure Centre.

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in brief...

kirkcaldy centre go-ahead

A £15m leisure and swimming complex has been given the green light in Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland. Fife Council and Fife Sport & Leisure Trust are behind the scheme, with the former approving the plans for the centre, which is to be built on the site of the Tolbooth Street Car Park.

The new leisure centre will include a 25m swimming pool, a smaller teaching pool with moveable floor, a health suite, a full-size sports hall, a play centre, a 60-station fitness suite, a large aerobics studio, a meeting room and a café. However, a row has erupted due to the location of the proposed centre, with locals fearing that the removal of parking facilities will adversely affect high street shops.

new fitness facilities for wombourn complex

Work has now started on a refurbishment programme at Wombourne Leisure Centre in Staffordshire, which is set to deliver new-look fitness facilities at the venue. The scheme will include moving the group cycling centre to a new sound-proofed location at the centre, with new lighting and sound system. The studio is also set to benefit from the installation of 40 new Star Trac Spinner bikes. Meanwhile, Wombourne Leisure Centre's toning suite – originally opened in 1992 – will be relocated and completely overhauled to feature Shapemaster Easy Tone toning chairs and new toning beds.



The NPS survey will examine the satisfaction levels of club members

member loyalty study to launch

Research companies Leisure-net Solutions and The Retention People (TRP) have joined forces to launch a new customer service survey for the health and fitness sector.

Taking place in September this year, the study will aim to offer companies in the health, fitness and leisure sector a simpler way to measure their performance.

Called the Net Promoter Score (NPS), the method measures satisfaction and loyalty levels of members by asking just one question: "How likely is it that you would recommend our company to a friend or colleague?" According to a spokesperson, the metric has been proven across more than 12 different industries and has been directly linked to "business growth, profitability and increased use of product".

The NPS survey will be offered free of charge to more than 400 public and private operators in order to create an industry benchmark.

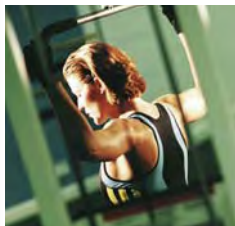
£117m funding for wiltshire

Wiltshire Council is to cut costs by handing over a number of leisure centres for local community groups to operate, although it has pledged to spend £117m on upgrading existing facilities and building replacement centres.

The Corsham, Downton, Pewsbury, Tisbury, Westbury and Wootton Bassett leisure centres will be transferred to local communities, as will Westbury and Bradford-on-Avon swimming pools.

The plans come as the council estimates that it would need to spend £93m to maintain the existing 23 facilities over the next 15 years. This would not include any improvements or new facilities, which the council has deemed "unaffordable and unsustainable" in the present financial climate.

However, there are plans to build new centres at Melksham and Warminster (both with a four-lane, 25m swimming pool and health club) and Trowbridge (with an eight-lane, 25m pool and fitness suite).



Plans will result in three new leisure centres in the Wiltshire area

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Facilities at the centre will include a swimming pool and a large fitness club

work starts on £27m complex

Work is now underway on the construction of the new £27m Hengrove Leisure Centre in Bristol, which will be delivered by the local authority and Bristol Active Leisure (BAL) through a private finance initiative (PFI).

The facility, which forms part of a wider regeneration scheme, will incorporate a 10-lane, Olympic-sized swimming pool with adjustable floor and vertical booms, a learner pool with adjustable floor and a 150-station fitness suite. A four-court sports hall, a spa area – featuring a hot tub, sauna and steamroom – a group exercise studio, changing facilities, a crèche and

a café are also being created as part of the development, which is due for completion in February 2012.

Bristol City Council deputy leader Simon Cook says: “The new leisure facility will be the city’s and region’s flagship pool and sports facility. It will attract swimmers of all ages and abilities – and best of all, its design and high specification will inspire adults and children to take to the water and make a real splash.”

BAL’s Fabio D’Alonzo adds: “We look forward to delivering leisure facilities as well contributing to the regeneration of south Bristol.”

idea predicts future trends

The global membership organisation for exercise professionals, IDEA Health & Fitness Association (IDEA), has published the results of its 15th annual IDEA Fitness Programs & Equipment Trends Report.

The survey, aimed at clubs and mapping out the latest fitness trends, shows that personal training is still in high demand, with equipment trends also aligned with the growth in personal training; easily transportable kit that can be individualised tops the list in the IDEA survey.

new ‘baby gym’ opens

Durham County Council’s (DCC) Sure Start Children’s Centre in Haswell has unveiled a new gym area for babies and children up to the age of two.

Launched on 2 August, the Baby Gym has been established to help develop the skills of youngsters who are lying down, crawling or beginning to walk. The facility offers soft play equipment and other “appropriate” toys.

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gym clinic to open two sites

The owner of The Gym Clinic health club in Chiswick, London, has announced plans to open two new sites in 2011.

Gavin Sunshine, who opened the first Gym Clinic earlier this year, said the independent club is based on providing members with a personal experience. "At The Gym Clinic we want to offer a different form of training to our clients," he says.

"We want to motivate them to reach their goals and also want them to keep coming back once they've achieved their goals."

The Chiswick site has a capacity for 300 members and has so far attracted 180 active members, with around 70 per cent of those also signed up for paid-for personal training sessions.



Chiswick site will offer WaterRower rowing classes

Sunshine adds that he plans to expand the Chiswick site in time for the winter months, with the introduction of indoor cycling and rowing classes. He has already installed a number of Oartec rowing simulators from WaterRower.

aberman boxing club and gym re-opens

A boxing club and gym in Aberaman, South Wales, has re-opened following a £90,000 refurbishment.

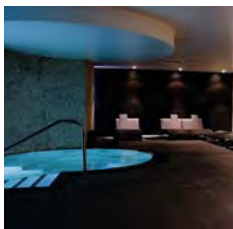
According to a spokesperson, the gym was on the brink of closure due to the condition of the building when local company Amgen "came to the rescue" and provided the funding for the renovation work.

New showers, toilets, walls and ceilings – and a brand new boxing ring – were installed as part of the work.



The £90,000 revamp of the gym was funded by a local company

expansion for chester gym



Facilities at the club include a full-service health and beauty spa

The fitness suite at the Club and Spa at Hoole Hall in Chester has been expanded following a £100,000 investment by its owner.

The gym at the 25,000sq m (270,000sq ft) club, which opened in November 2009 following an initial investment of £8m, has been upgraded with more treadmills, bikes, rowers and the installation of Technogym's Kinesis One cable system.

GM Paul Kelsall says: "The success of our first six months has been overwhelming but we have no intention of resting on our laurels, as this £100,000 investment in improving the gym proves."



Schwinn produces a range of indoor bikes that simulate the feel of road cycling

inspirit secures schwinn deal

Sports and fitness developer Inspirit has been appointed exclusive UK distributor of the indoor cycle series and Stairmaster Stepmill by manufacturer Schwinn.

The new indoor cycles from the US-based manufacturer include the 'Authentic Cycling' range – AC Classic, AC Sport and AC Performance – along with the IC Pro.

The Schwinn bikes have been designed to closely simulate the feel and aerobic qualities of road cycling.

Inspirit's managing director, Andy Mack, says: "Inspirit's bespoke approach

enables us to create a unique indoor cycling environment that reflects club brands and membership profiles and that represents business needs.

"Fitness clubs and gyms report a rise in the popularity of group cycling and booked-out classes, as more people find that it's the best way to reach their fitness goals."

Schwinn Fitness also offers an education programme and master instructors to support clubs.

Inspirit services also include design, build, refurbishment and development of leisure facilities.

octane secures mod contract

Elliptical exercise equipment manufacturer Octane Fitness has secured a deal to supply the Ministry of Defence with its seated Octane xR6000, Pro 3700 and Pro 3700 IFI cross-trainers.

Neil Campbell, Octane Fitness GM, says: "We went through a trial process where we had to prove our popularity and reliability, as would be expected. Critically, though, we also had to show we could offer something that other suppliers could not by demonstrating how unique our products are."

alliance success story

Alliance Leisure's Training Academy has seen more than 3,000 delegates pass through its courses since the Academy's launch just over six months ago.

More than 200 staff from Cardiff City Council alone have completed the Foundation Sales course, while a recent partnership with Coventry Sports Trust has resulted in all their staff attending various Academy modules.



WRITE
IN TO WIN!

To some, the words 'Sport' and 'Exercise' are used synonymously to mean the same thing – to complete physical activity. Yet, often people will talk about doing 'sport' or 'exercise' independently, claiming not to participate in one or the other.

This stigma is classically seen in those who do 'exercise' and would happily remove themselves completely from the world of sport. In most instances these exercisers view the training and nutrition practices of sports participants as elitist and irrelevant to their exercise regime.

However, by definition, exercise is "activity that requires physical or mental exertion", whilst sport is simply "physical activity that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often engaged competitively". Consequently, other than the specificity of the exercise that you do and maybe the seriousness (or standard) at which you take it, sport and exercise are essentially the same thing. This means that the fundamental principles of training and nutrition (whether deemed elitist or not) are largely relevant to all.

On the basis many of those who do exercise have some sort of goal that they are striving towards (i.e. weight loss, gaining muscle), the importance of good nutrition and hydration practices, however simple, remain true. Some would even argue there is an 'athlete' in all of us!

Nick Morgan

Head of Sport Science for Lucozade Sport

Email questions to:
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WIN! Simply email your sports nutrition questions to Nick Morgan. All questions featured in this column receive a Lucozade Sport prize pack. So, email soon!



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in brief...

vivafit brand awareness

Vivafit has the highest overall brand awareness among women in Portugal when compared with other fitness chains. This is one of the main conclusions of a market study conducted in June 2010 among women – not Vivafit customers – aged between 18 and 60 years.

For 77.3 per cent of the 1,000 women who participated in this study, Vivafit is the most recognised health club brand, followed by Holmes Place and Solinea.

It's the most recognised brand among women who don't exercise at gyms (68 per cent of respondents). For women who already exercise regularly in gyms (17.3 per cent of respondents), Holmes Place was placed first in terms of awareness.

The study was conducted by IMR – Instituto de Marketing Research.

shokk partners g&g

SHOKK has entered a partnership with US-based G&G Fitness to distribute its youth fitness products and concept in the north-eastern states of New York and Pennsylvania, and the mid-western state of Ohio.

Matthew Mozley, international sales manager at SHOKK, says: "Securing distributors in the US is key to our business development plan. As a major player in the sector, G&G Fitness is an ideal partner."

life fitness charity support

In the US, Life Fitness has offered its support to non-profit organisation Back On My Feet, which promotes running as a way to help the homeless lead better lives. In addition to its US\$7,500 (£4,800) donation, Life Fitness employees will volunteer as running mentors when the Chicago Chapter opens later this year.

Back On My Feet offers six- to nine-month programmes for the homeless that encourage self-sufficiency and confidence, with group runs three days a week plus races. On completion, members are put in contact with local companies for job training, educational scholarships and housing assistance.

'far east' club for world class

Russian Fitness Group announced the opening of its latest site in July.

The new World Class club is located in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, a city on one of the Kuril islands, which lie in the Western Pacific at the far east of Russia, just north of Japan.



The new club is the chain's largest in the 'Far East' region of Russia

At 3,500sq m (37,670sq ft), World Class Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk is the operator's largest club in the 'Far East' region of Russia. Located in the local shopping centre – City Mall – the site is operated on a franchise basis.

The new club offers a full line-up of fitness and spa services. Facilities include a 755sq m (8,125sq ft) state of the art gym equipped by Life Fitness, Hammer Strength and Hoist. There's also a swimming pool, four group exercise studios, three personal training studios, kids' club and sport hall. This 1,000sq m (10,760sq ft) hall offers the capacity for a wide range of sports, such as basketball, volleyball, football and tennis.

These facilities are complemented by a fitness café, Turkish and Finnish baths, and a 'Beauty Spa by World Class'.

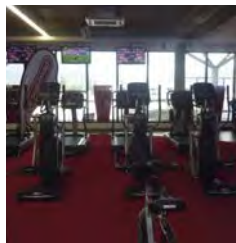
fitlane opens its fourth club

FITLane opened its latest club – located on the outskirts of Nice, in the south of France – on 26 July.

The 2,400sq m (25,830sq ft) facility, which has been equipped by Star Trac, offers CV, resistance and free weight zones, as well as a group exercise studio, Spinning classes, vibration training and a sauna. There are also 600 free car parking spaces for use by members.

The club attracted 1,700 members during pre-sale; expectations are for 2,500 members by the end of the year.

Nice is the fourth club for FITLane, with all the operator's sites located in the French Riviera. A fifth club will open at the end of 2010 in Cannes la Bocca.



The 2,400sq m facility has been kitted out by Star Trac

fitlinxx rolls out training partner to spain

Exercise management expert FitLinxx has introduced its new Strength Training Partner to four clubs in Spain.

Three of the sites are equipped by Life Fitness: the 60-station Sport Centre Sangar, in Toledo; the 160-station Ekke club in Lleida; and the BAKH complex in Tau Vitoria, with a 600sq m (6,460sq ft) gym among its wide range of facilities. Plenarium Wellness, in Jaen, is FitLinxx's first installation with Matrix in Spain.

Due for official UK launch at LNW, but already available globally, Strength Training

Partner integrates with FitLinxx's existing system, replacing the previous strength solution and sitting alongside the wireless CV module launched in 2008. It offers a full-colour touchscreen, WiFi connectivity and improved sound and aesthetics. From Q4 2010, a software upgrade known as ALI (Attention Level Indicator) will also be available. This turns the screen different colours depending on how experienced members are – a quick way for staff to identify those in need of additional guidance.



The retractable roof means the swimming pool can be used all year round

retractable roof for royal glenora

The Royal Glenora Club in Edmonton, Canada, re-opened recently following a CA\$15m (£9.2m) redevelopment.

The centrepiece of the project was the creation of a CA\$8m (£4.9m), 1,300sq m (14,000sq ft) aquatic centre which opened on 28 June. The only facility of its kind in western Canada, the new centre is contained within a fully enclosed glass structure with a retractable roof, created and installed by OpenAire. With a sensor for rain, the roof automatically closes to ensure access to the swimming facilities 365 days of the year.

The new facility replaces an outdated outdoor pool – which could only be used for a couple of months each year –

with a 24m lap pool, a shallow, child-friendly pool and a hot tub.

"We now have a beautiful, light-filled space that's warm enough to enjoy even in the coldest months. Then, in the summer, we can transform it into a genuine open-air pool when it's sunny," says general manager Dave Warren.

Aside from the aquatic centre, the club's facilities include a newly surfaced ice skating rink, 10 indoor and outdoor tennis courts, plus eight squash and five badminton courts – also all newly resurfaced. There's also a fitness studio, a games area including five-pin bowling, a crèche and kids' play areas, and a selection of cafés and dining options.

énergie flagship for qatar

The énergie Group will open its largest ever fitness club on 1 October.

Set in the Villaggio Mall in Doha, Qatar, the US\$7m (£4.5m), purpose-built club measures 3,716sq m (40,000sq ft). To respect local culture, énergie Villaggio will feature an énergie Fitness Club for men on one side and an énergie Fitness Club for ladies on the other, with SHOKK énergie – the kids' fitness franchise offering – in the middle.

Facilities will include a boxing studio, three group exercise fitness studios and a spa area. The club will be fitted out

with the latest Precor, Life Fitness and Hammer Strength equipment.

There will also be a valet service, prayer rooms and ablution rooms.

This latest club follows on from the franchise's first opening in Qatar: a £2m site that opened near Doha Airport in February. Jan Spaticchia, énergie Group CEO, says: "We're delighted with the response from local people. Having opened the airport club and effectively translated the énergie brand into Arabic, we are successfully bringing the UK model over to the Middle East."

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from the board



new government

tony majakas • vp health
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technogym

As we begin to settle down with our new coalition government and face the clear need to cut the public purse to balance our national debt, we can now see how we, as an industry, can play a more active role in helping manage and reduce the cost of the NHS.

It's clear that effective cost control of the NHS requires a move from the expensive and growing curative treatment model to a more cost-effective 'lifestyle model'. In order to do this, our industry has to change. We must take responsibility for providing evidence outcomes of health improvement in order to gain funding opportunities which are available for interventions that work.

For example, Technogym has signed a Global Partner agreement with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) to promote the 'Exercise is Medicine' initiative across the globe. Another new initiative is the 'Active Doctors, Active Patients' programme, designed to encourage GPs to develop a more profound understanding of prescribing exercise – a vital move given that they now control the funding.

We must start thinking how we can get more people, more active, before the world's greatest sports event hits our shores – the 2012 Olympic Games. Exciting times ahead!

fia partnership with m&s



'Get Back Into': Eight-week programmes to get women back into activity

FIA members are being asked to create a special course of activity – lasting a minimum of eight weeks – as part of an exciting new campaign to be run in conjunction with one of the UK's best known brands: Marks & Spencer.

Through a partnership with the Fitness Industry Association, Sport England, county sports partnerships and governing bodies of sport, Marks & Spencer is embarking on a project that's designed to encourage people to try new activities with a view to becoming fitter and healthier.

The 'Get Back Into' campaign offers everyone the chance to rediscover the active lifestyle they used to lead.

Not only will there be a choice of fun, friendly group activities in which to participate, but there will also be Marks & Spencer vouchers as a reward for taking part and as a thank you at the end of the eight weeks.

Developed primarily for women aged 25–65 who do little sport or physical activity, the M&S pilot is taking place in the east of England from September to December 2010, with a view to a national roll-out in September 2011. Price-setting is up to individual FIA members.

M&S will promote the initiative online and in the local press, driving participants to the 'Get Back Into' website where FIA members' offers will be listed.

gmtv meets liw

GMTV's resident life coach Pete Cohen will spearhead the FIA workshop programme at LIW as part of the launch of the TwentyTen Industry Strategy. Launched earlier in the day by David Stalker, FIA executive director, this will include the unveiling of results from the recent industry consultation, as well as a new five-year strategy for the industry.

The workshops will also feature industry experts such as Georgina Jupp of CK Academy, who will address the topical issue of 'Enlightened Customer Care and the Emotional Connection'. Meanwhile Keith Burnett, vice president



for global spa and fitness at Hilton, will focus on 'Achieving Membership Sales From the Disengaged'.

To reserve your place at the workshops, please visit www.liw.co.uk

new partnership with physios

It will provide clarity as to whether someone needs to see a physio or a fitness instructor



The FIA's chief medical officer Dr John Searle talks about the new partnership

The FIA is pleased to announce a partnership with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP). Planning, supervising, delivering and monitoring exercise are key parts of the roles of both fitness instructors and physiotherapists.

The new partnership will encourage improved collaboration between the two professions, as well as offering referral guidance to GPs and other health and wellbeing professionals.

The FIA's chief medical officer, Dr John Searle, OBE, answers a few questions about the scheme.

WHY IS THE PARTNERSHIP NEEDED?

Traditionally physiotherapists have worked predominantly in functional rehabilitation in the health sector, whereas fitness instructors have worked with healthy clients, often guiding them towards specified fitness goals. The partnership will provide clarity as to whether an individual needs to see a physio or a fitness instructor and address the 'grey area' that currently exists when it comes to rehabilitation.

WHAT BENEFIT WILL THE PARTNERSHIP BRING TO MEMBERS?

The partnership will ensure that the correct treatment is given, help to raise the profile of the fitness industry in the rehabilitation process and, most importantly, allow members to return to exercise as quickly and safely as possible.

HOW WILL THIS MAKE THE POPULATION HEALTHIER AND IMPROVE PATIENT EXPERIENCE?

We know that, for many illnesses and injuries, exercise plays a vital part in

prevention and treatment. The guidelines will help to ensure that individuals return to exercise as quickly as possible, thereby contributing to a healthy lifestyle. It will open up opportunities for appointments in member facilities and ensure people get into recovery more efficiently.

HOW LONG IS IT GOING TO TAKE?

The FIA and CSP have started work on the guidelines and have agreed a 12-month schedule with a view to having them published in early 2012.



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flame conference review

David Stalker, the FIA's executive director, reports on the recent FIA FLAME Conference



The FIA FLAME Conference is still the new kid on the block, having just completed its second year.

It's an event entirely run by the FIA, with a focused purpose of educating, inspiring and celebrating the industry. It's the FIA team manning the phones in the weeks and months leading up to the event (alongside their usual roles in working with government, supporting our members and delivering programmes and campaigns), greeting our guests at the door on the day and showing them the way to do it on the dance floor in the evening.

What made this year's event special for me was that it marked almost a full year in post as FIA executive director.

In that time, we've had much to contend with, not least a rocky economy and a change in government.

It pleases me no end to say that this event marked a major moment. All of the feedback we've received showed that the FIA is increasingly relevant to its members and has its finger on the pulse

of the industry. There's no surprise in that: it's a result of listening intently to what the industry wants and its thoughts on where we should be going.

That has been the primary purpose of the FIA TwentyTen Commission, which was launched for consultation with the industry at the FLAME Conference, and which is also playing a key role in marking the FIA's 20 years of service as the industry's trade body.

Many of my key takeaways from the conference relate directly back to what we have found through the TwentyTen Commission process and clearly point towards the challenges ahead.

medical representation

It was fantastic to have such a strong medical representation at the FLAME Conference.

You have to be a fairly passionless individual not to be inspired by the FIA's own chief medical officer, Dr John Searle. Forced to retire as a consultant within the NHS due to the crippling effects of rheumatoid arthritis, Dr Searle used exercise as his route back to mobility. Anyone who attended his session would have been clear about the opportunities and challenges posed by the use of exercise in the treatment and management of chronic conditions.

I'm particularly struck by the opportunities presented by the ageing society. The European Commission has stated that by 2060, across Europe, the ageing demographic profile is going to lead to related expenditure (healthcare, social care, pensions) rising by 4.75 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In the UK, this equates to an extra £65.2bn of public spending every year – and this is on top of the £50bn that needs to be found to manage lifestyle-related conditions linked to obesity.

This was a message reinforced by Dr Charlie Foster of Oxford University, who joined Searle for his session. Dr Foster was clear that the reforms to the public health system over the next few years mark a major opportunity for the industry, as long as it's able to organise itself and provide the evidence-based solutions that are needed by the health sector.

This was a poignant and timely reinforcement of the findings of the

TwentyTen Commission and the 'Exercise as Medicine' project led by Dr Searle.

forging partnerships

We also welcomed some key FIA partners to the conference. Thomas Godfrey, commercial director of Sport England, talked about the opportunities presented by harnessing the power of technology to get more people active. Godfrey highlighted the work that Sport England has done to build partnerships with Facebook and Google, a project that holds much promise for the sector.

However, it's my conviction that we need to do a little bit of work first, as a sector, to get into a position to take advantage of these types of partnership.

We have to ensure that we're making the best use of our existing technology, in sites across the country. We then have to make booking and using our services more accessible, publishing information and opportunities to purchase online. Only then will we be in a position to harness the aforementioned opportunities presented by Facebook and Google, as well as other affiliates, to drive additional usage and revenue.

There's no secret in this: other sectors such as hospitality, travel and gambling have already made great strides in this area.

Online gambling is one of the fastest-growing sectors of online activity. In 2008, the UK online gambling market was worth £2.5bn. KPMG estimates that this will increase by some 42 per cent by 2012, bringing the UK market to £3.55bn and the global market above £20bn. The latest Gambling Commission report suggests that there are almost four million online gamblers in the UK – a 10-fold increase in just five years.

Meanwhile, in 2008, online bookings were responsible for more than half of all UK holidays booked. In fact, the UK online travel market is so large that it accounted for over a third of all European online bookings in 2008.

In the same year, the online travel market was estimated by JP Morgan to be worth almost £15bn a year, with annual increases of almost 20 per cent year-on-year since 2000. An indication of the huge size of the market is the



The FIA FLAME Conference grew by 200 delegates, to 650, this year

See it.



The conference offered many seminars, including how to put a name to a face

fact that 10 per cent of all of google's revenue in 2009 came from travel-related search queries.

The fact that our industry has yet to make real progress in this field presents a major opportunity in the years ahead.

This issue, among many others, is covered in depth in the Data and Research work-package under the TwentyTen Commission. This will form a key part of the FIA's role as an organisation going forwards, supporting members to make progress in this area.

getting inspired

However, while the strategic challenges and opportunities facing the industry featured high on the agenda of the conference, it was equally important that delegates were able to take things away to implement in their business immediately. In this respect, there was no shortage of inspiration.

For example, like most people of my generation, my memory is starting to fade, which is why I particularly enjoyed Bob Gray's session – opening up the conference – which provided some tried and tested techniques to stop that painfully embarrassing feeling of experiencing a mental blank (in terms of a name) when presented with a face that I really, really should know!

We also had fantastic reports from the session run by Phil Dourado on developing leaders at every level. He had a fantastic story about President Kennedy touring NASA headquarters. Kennedy stopped to talk to a man with a mop. "And what do you do?" asked the president. "I'm helping to put a man on the moon, sir," replied the cleaner. Inspiring passion and commitment from our whole workforce, supporting them to understand our industry's wider value and importance, is crucial in the years ahead and another key theme of the TwentyTen Commission as we look to up-skill our sector's workforce.

Overall, the event was of relevance to a broad audience of professionals in our industry. With four concurrent sessions going on throughout the day, there was something for everyone to take home with them. Our event grew by over 200 delegates this year to 650 people. We're proud of that, but we're not resting there. We believe the event will grow once more next year and that the FLAME Conference is here to stay as a major part of our industry's calendar.

We couldn't do it without our sponsors and we thank them all for their continued support. We also thank every one of the 650 delegates who supported the event on the day.





Brian Leonard: sporta CEO

sporta role for dcms director

The Sports & Recreation Trusts Association (sporta) has appointed Brian Leonard, a former lead policy director for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as its new chief executive.

As part of his role, Leonard will present and pursue a strategic view of sporta's opportunities as he heads up the organisation's day-to-day operations, as well as leading negotiations with government departments and other stakeholders.

He spent 10 years as a senior civil servant at the DCMS and was lead policy director across a number of areas, including tourism and leisure.

During recent years he led policy on, among others, the Licensing Act and the Millennium programme.

in brief...

new trustees for abbeycroft leisure

Leisure trust Abbeycroft Leisure has appointed Selina Austin and Sally Hogg as trustees to its board.

Austin, a brand manager with more than 10 years' marketing experience, is currently a partner at creative agency The Design Office.

Hogg is head of health improvement partnerships with NHS Suffolk and has been credited with being one of the driving forces behind Healthy Ambitions Suffolk, an initiative to make Suffolk the UK's healthiest county by 2028.

new gm for énergie middle east

The énergie Group has appointed Nathan Gardiner as its new general manager for the Middle East.

Gardiner will relocate from his Dubai-based position with Fitness First and join the énergie team in Doha, Qatar, where énergie is currently planning to open a number of clubs.

He will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the énergie club near Doha airport, as well as for driving up membership numbers.

After starting his career in 2001 at Fitness Exchange, Gardiner moved to a managerial position with LivingWell Health Clubs. He was then appointed general manager of the Dragons Health Club in Middlesex and went on to manage an LA Fitness facility following the buyout of the Dragons chain.

He then moved to Dubai to work for Fitness First Middle East, where he was



Nathan Gardiner takes on new role

tasked with overseeing a new opening as well as managing the largest Fitness First club in the group – and the only Fitness First Platinum facility in Dubai.

pure gym adds to sales team

Budget club operator Pure Gym has appointed Elaine McNamee as group sales and marketing manager to support the expansion plans of the business.

As part of her role, McNamee will be tasked with maximising online income streams and working closely with the senior management team to deliver the overall corporate strategy for the growing business.

She joins the company from West Ham United Football Club, where she was partnerships manager, responsible

for creating commercial opportunities to increase revenue streams. She has also worked for Esporta Health Clubs.

McNamee says: "I have worked in the leisure industry for many years and am excited to be part of an ambitious company. I'm looking forward to playing an active role for Pure Gym, which has a compelling offering in the sector."

The company has confirmed plans to open 24 new sites across the UK over the next two years.

promotions at precor

Precor has announced the promotions of two of its sales team. Steve Shaw, who has been with Precor for three years and was responsible for group accounts, has been promoted to senior group account manager to head up key accounts, as well as defining new business opportunities. He will take on the responsibilities of Tom Fairey, who has left the company to set up his own business.

The vacancy left by Shaw will be filled by Jo Headington, who has been promoted to the position from her previous role in regional sales.

chris clawson appointed president of life fitness

Brunswick, the company which owns the Life Fitness and Hammer Strength brands, has appointed Chris Clawson as the new president of Life Fitness.

Clawson returns to Life Fitness following a four-year stint as the president and CEO of Johnson Health Tech North America, the manufacturer of Matrix Fitness equipment.

Clawson replaces John Stransky, who left Life Fitness in April. Clawson's former roles also include the vice presidency of marketing and business development for Stamina Products.

PEOPLE PROFILE



annie redelinghuys

Despite being a relative newcomer to the industry, the Curves franchisee is already making waves. She was awarded the FIA's Future of FLAME Award earlier this year

How many years have you worked in the health and fitness sector?
Three and half years.

What was your motivation to get into fitness?

I've always been conscious about health and working with communities; Curves gave me the opportunity to do both.

How did you end up being a franchisee at Curves?

I was taking care of a friend in hospital when her sister came to visit from America and gave me a *Diane (Curves) Magazine*. I was amazed at the way they were helping women throughout the world and wanted to be part of it.

Describe your typical day

There's no typical day at Curves Gravesend – we do whatever the members need most. However, the club opens at 8.30am and we spend most of our time encouraging our members on the circuit. Our aim is to motivate members in a variety aspects of their lives, so we also run various women's networking groups and offer motivational talks through Business Link.

What does winning the Future of FLAME award mean to you?

Apart from the great honour and appreciation for being recognised, I

hope this will set a standard that will encourage more women from different backgrounds, and ultimately their families, to get healthier and fitter.

What gave you the edge?

It's not about having an edge. I simply think the focus of my project – working with hard to reach groups – resonated with all the people who voted for me.

Do you plan to use the award for marketing your club?

The award is proof that there's a way we can help strengthen women in the community to achieve their true potential. It's not simply a marketing tool but evidence that what many thought was impossible is, in fact, possible.

What drives you?

Meeting someone, knowing that they need support, and then seeing them blossom and gain confidence. That may be through weight loss, overcoming depression or just socialising with members in the club.

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

I don't believe it's the weakness of the fitness industry – more the weakness of the health industry and government for not giving the fitness industry enough attention, not referring more people, not encouraging more people to take care of their health, not focusing on prevention as an alternative to treating illness.

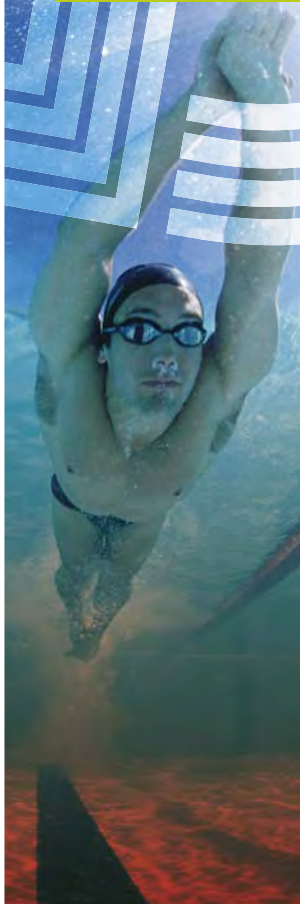
What's your favourite life motto

I believe that anything worth doing is worth doing well!



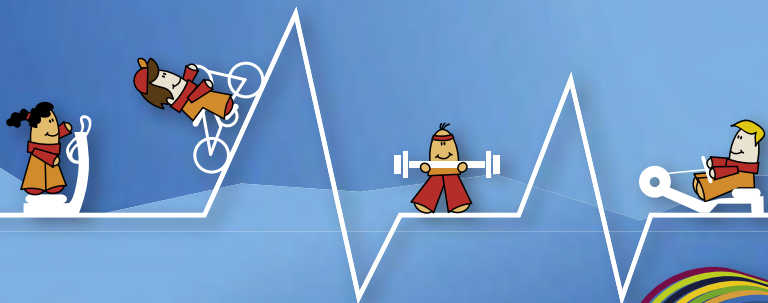
Redelinghuys receives her award

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The Health+Fitness Business Expo will be held in Las Vegas

SEPTEMBER

21 | LPF Seminar

Venue DKA Associates offices, London
Summary

This seminar will review the opportunities and prospects for co-operation between the healthcare sector and the health and fitness industry. It will particularly concentrate on government health policies, medical treatment and social attitudes.

Tel +44 (0)1462 471932

Web www.leisurepropertyforum.org

21-23 | Leisure Industry Week

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK
Summary

LIW is the UK's largest leisure event, attracting thousands of leisure professionals and more than 350 industry suppliers. The show is now sub-divided into seven sectors: Health & Fitness, Pool & Spa, Attractions Expo, Licensed Business Show, Eat & Drink, Leisure Facilities and The Sport Show.

Tel +44 (0)20 7955 3969

Web www.liw.co.uk

22-23 | Health+Fitness Business Expo & Conference

Venue Sands Convention Center, Las Vegas, US
Summary

Manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, buyers, press and industry professionals come together to shape the future of the fitness sector at this trade expo and conference.

Tel +1 949 226 5712

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com

23-26 | Inner IDEA Conference

Venue Palm Springs, California, US

Summary

Inner IDEA's mission is to "inspire the world to wellness through body, mind and spirit". The Inner IDEA Conference offers demonstrations with a strong focus on education.

Tel +1 858 535 8979

Web www.inneridea.com

23-26 | SIBEC North America

Venue Braselton, Atlanta, US

Summary

SIBEC North America is a meeting and networking forum for leading club owners and operators in the US – CEOs and COOs of health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations – to meet one-to-one with key suppliers.

Tel +1 603 529 0077

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

OCTOBER

6-8 | European Fitness Summit

Venue Barcelona, Spain

Summary

One-to-one meeting forum for top decision-makers in the fitness, wellness and health industry to discuss business with the sector's key suppliers.

Tel +49 211 90 191 204

Web www.european-fitness-summit.com

18-21 | IHRSA

European Congress

Venue Princesa Sofia Hotel, Barcelona, Spain

Summary

Featuring presentations and keynote speeches from business leaders, both from within and outside of the health and fitness industry. Delegates will also have ample opportunity to network.

Tel +1 617 951 0055

Web www.ihrsa.org



SIBEC's North American meeting will take place in Atlanta, Georgia

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SEPT-NOV 2010

rowing for help for heros

Concept2 and Help for Heroes have joined forces in a campaign to encourage people to get on rowing machines and raise money for the charity, which supports members of the armed forces who have been wounded in service. There are a number of challenges outlined on Concept2's website and there's also a section where you can log your distances and money raised. The final will take place on 21 November at the British Indoor Rowing Championships. Details: www.concept2.co.uk



Concept2 and Help for Heroes have joined forces to raise money



The Bog of Doom claims a victim!

7 & 27-28 NOV 2010

2010 puma hellrunner series

Online entries are now open for the Puma HellRunner races held in Cheshire and Hampshire on 7 and 27-28 November respectively. The 10- to 12-mile courses include challenging off-road routes which comprise tough, twisting trails and the infamous Hills of Hell and Bog of Doom. Online entry for the event costs £25. Details: www.hellrunner.co.uk

14 & 21 NOV 2010

resolution 15k

Want to go a step beyond a 10k, but not quite ready for a half marathon? The Stroke Association's Resolution 15k could be the answer. There are two 15km runs in London: one in Regent's Park and one in Richmond Park, on 14 and 21 November respectively. The runs are the final distance in the charity's Resolution 2010 series, which has included a 5km in Battersea Park and 10km in Finsbury Park. The series was introduced last year and has been designed to encourage people to keep fit and stay motivated beyond their New Year's promise. The entry fee is only £15 and there's no minimum sponsorship requirement. Details: www.stroke.org.uk



London will host two 15km runs

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everyone's talking about . . .

a medical approach

It's taking a long time, but the day might be coming when the healthcare sector reaches out to the fitness industry. Is this the right path for all operators?

It's a widely held opinion that, at least based on current population trends and predictions, the healthcare organisations as we know them today will be unable to meet the demands placed on them in the future – the demands of an ageing and increasingly obese population – and our health systems will become unsustainable.

The time is ripe, it seems, for change: the NHS can't cope with the problems being caused by obesity, stress and an ageing population, and the fitness industry has some of the answers. The FIA is already on a big drive to work with PCTs and the NHS to deliver

genuine preventative healthcare, which would mean real growth for the sector and open up a whole new market. And yet the NHS still isn't proactively knocking on the door, which for some is a source of great frustration.

But is a medicalised approach to fitness even the right direction for our whole sector to be going in? It certainly isn't a decision clubs should take lightly. Becoming a 'wellness provider' would mean dealing with people with fragile health, with all the first aid support that entails. Staff would need to be highly skilled and some specialist equipment would be needed. Might this change the club environment from being buzzy and

dynamic to feeling overly serious and even off-putting to existing members?

On the flip side, reaching out to this market could be rewarding for the industry, not only by tapping into a new market but also by giving staff the opportunity to save lives and help people who would never otherwise have found their way into a health club. This work would be a satisfying challenge for most fitness professionals.

So what should clubs do? Carry on as they are, mainly appealing to those who join for fitness reasons? Or embark on a difficult journey into becoming a wellness provider? We ask our panel of experts for their thoughts.

IS MEDICAL FITNESS THE WAY FORWARD? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

georgina jupp

ck academy • managing director



"I think it's absolutely critical for the future of our sector to tap into the medical fitness market. We still have a model that appeals mainly to the fit, or at least fitter; there's tremendous potential for us to address the current health inequality issues and enjoy an immensely satisfying and rewarding business.

However, before moving in this direction, operators need to make clear strategic decisions, based on what will be required of their businesses as providers of wellness, and assessing whether the current model suits them. To enter this emerging market requires the presentation of a clear and appealing message, dedicated staff with appropriate levels of expertise, the ability to persevere as we build relationships with the healthcare sector, and the use of existing research.

Our sector must now work together to present a coherent message and change the outdated perceptions which many in the healthcare sector have of our abilities and facilities. Unprecedented sharing of knowledge and mutual support is needed. Our experience points to an ongoing reluctance within the healthcare sector to change, so it will be a long, hard slog, but the NHS has no choice but to work with us. Eventually."

john searle

fitness industry association • chief medical officer



"Exercise is the best medicine for a long and healthy life, so why wouldn't the fitness sector want to engage with the health service – and vice versa?

We have an opportunity to make a major impact on the health of the nation, but we have great commercial opportunity too, working with people heading for serious disease as well as

those with established medical conditions. If the coalition government's health reforms come to fruition – with GPs, not PCTs, responsible for commissioning – the process of getting to these people will be made easier. But clubs will need to develop good relationships with GPs, practice nurses and physios.

I don't think clubs becoming more medical in their focus would detrimentally affect the workout environment, but facilities would have to be friendly and welcoming to the older member, with good front of house reception, instructors on the gym floor who are able to support these members, and good facilities for socialising. This is an exciting opportunity; our clubs are far removed from the clinical atmosphere of the GP surgery or the hospital clinic, which will encourage people to come to us for these services."



PHOTO: WWW.SPORTENGLAND.ORG

The UK's ageing population is placing a strain on the NHS. Can the fitness sector step in to deliver preventative healthcare?

dr hugh bethell

basingstoke and alton cardiac rehab centre • founder



"Providers of illness services and providers of exercise facilities should definitely join together. The Basingstoke and Alton Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre is an example of this type of partnership. We've been working with people with heart problems since 1976, starting out in a sports centre and moving to our

own facility in 1997. Our patients come to us from the local hospital: everyone in the Basingstoke area who has a coronary revascularisation is given the opportunity to enter our programme. In addition, we accept direct referrals from GPs.

Every hospital in the UK now offers exercise-based rehab to its heart attack and bypass graft patients. After what's often a rather brief period of graded exercise, these patients need follow-on exercise, and some education, which could be provided by health clubs. Indeed, I think these people should be exercising in mainstream health clubs and not corralled together to exercise in a special coronary group; I see no reason why this should have any negative impact on other members. The only caveat is that instructors must be well trained, with the British Association for Cardiac Rehabilitation qualification."

holm hofmann

milon • business development uk



"If a fitness business provides more than a pure lifestyle service, it can attract a different customer segment and boost retention. For example, back rehabilitation and weight management programmes have clearly defined targets and outcomes, and are much needed.

If the industry wants to be taken seriously by the government, it needs to

further develop relationships on a micro level by engaging with the local medical fraternity. Clubs need to make clever use of technology to provide data for health insurers and GPs.

There are forward-thinking clubs in the UK which have already embarked on the path to growth by engaging with the medical community and offering high quality rehabilitation and preventative programmes, but we can also learn from the fitness sector in Europe. Offering high quality medical services requires highly qualified staff, and some clubs in Europe now employ physios instead of fitness instructors. Members at these clubs happily commit to two-year contracts and pay premium prices, and annual attrition can be as low as 10 per cent. These clubs have paid attention to design and layout, so people feel comfortable – not like they're visiting a hospital or a GP."

STEVE LEWIS & JON WILLIAMS

The owner and general manager of The Marlow Club talk to Kate Cracknell about building a business by thinking differently



The secret to a successful health club," says Steve Lewis, owner of the RFL Group, "is growing your core membership." To illustrate his point, he grabs my notepad and pen and starts drawing – a large circle with, at its centre, a very small circle. "That's your core membership," he explains, pointing to the small circle. "They're the people who'll never leave you."

"You'll always have some people – people who sit at the outer edge of this larger circle – who see the club simply as a facility. There's little you can do to build greater loyalty in these people. Instead, you should focus on identifying potential core members and channel your energy into building loyalty among this group."

Lewis' comments draw on over 30 years' experience in the industry. Formerly a semi-professional squash coach, he moved into health club operations with Wates Leisure, where he was involved in its transition from unprofitable squash clubs

to fully-fledged health and fitness facilities under the Pinnacle Leisure Group brand. These clubs were sold, after his departure, to Cannons for an estimated £80m.

In 1993, he left Pinnacle to create the Axis Health and Fitness Group, a start-up which he grew to four clubs, and which was sold to Crown Sports in 2001 for just under £15m. "Looking back on it now, it was ridiculously successful: the first club was profitable by the fifth month of trading and we had 1,800 members within a year," says Lewis. "Back then, those sorts of results were possible without even being that good. Nowadays it's much harder. You have to keep evolving and learning to do things differently, to do things better, in order to set yourself apart from the ever-growing competition."

never-ending improvement

In 2001, Lewis established a new company, RFL Ltd, under the umbrella of which he took over the Oasis Health Club in Marlow in 2003 – since

extended, including a new pool, and rebranded The Marlow Club. A privately-owned company with around 42 shareholders, many of whom had also been shareholders in the Axis Group, RFL now owns three clubs: The Marlow Club and The Windsor Club, as well as a site in Mill Hill, north London, which, says Lewis, "has potential – we've been frustrated in our plans for the site so far, but we're still hopeful for both its near- and long-term future". RFL is also involved in The Thames Club, in Staines, on a management contract basis.

"I don't have huge expansion plans," Lewis continues. "We might add a club from time to time, but only if it's a site with what we consider to be unique qualities. I'm certainly not in an acquisitive frame of mind: essentially I want the company to stay small and for our investment to go into our existing clubs. We have a philosophy of constant, never-ending improvement, caring for our facilities on a daily basis."

"We had to look at cost-cutting at The Marlow Club to get it financially back on-track when we took it over, but since then it's been about innovation, improving the product every day, investing in our staff and building a local reputation based on integrity. There's no area we aren't prepared to look at, to continually try and do things better."

Indeed, when I visited The Marlow Club in July, there was a large amount of construction work going on: a revamp to the main studio, new flooring going in



The gym includes kit from a number of suppliers: Technogym, Life Fitness, Precor, gym80 and milon



When RFL acquired
The Marlow Club, it
undertook a significant
extension project,
including a new pool



Members at Marlow pay an additional £6 a month to use the milon circuit

▶ throughout the club, and a new baby scan room being built (of which more later). There are also imminent plans to build three more therapy rooms, taking the total to eight, and to refurbish the group cycling studio – further evidence of a consistent schedule of capital investment.

innovation & differentiation

Jon Williams, general manager of The Marlow Club – who was also at the club under its previous ownership – continues:

“Everything in the industry nowadays is the same: everything’s about price, discounting, special offers. But in fact what people want is quality of service and results, and I think we’re getting consistently better at delivering that.”

“The key thing at our club is that we’re always changing, always finding something new. I want this to be a place where people can get near enough any service. It’s not just a gym – it’s a club. For me, it’s not enough to learn from other fitness facilities; I think we need to learn from other industries too.”

“As a single site operator, you have a great opportunity to create a totally unique offering – one that changes the client mentality in terms of what they want and expect from their club. I don’t want anyone to walk out of here and join another club and feel it’s the same. We’ll find a way, with new ideas, to ensure people don’t want to leave us, because no matter where they go they know

they’re never going to get the same service, the same equipment, the same ongoing improvement as they do here.”

Lewis agrees: “For me, the consolidation of the industry over recent years has been inevitable but, at the same time, has potentially played into the hands of the independents: the greater the consolidation, the more commonalities and the less groundbreaking the message. That allows us to be innovative, direct, quick on our feet. It’s never been as easy for us to differentiate ourselves, and I think it will get easier still. That doesn’t mean we can get complacent, but it does mean the opportunity’s there for us to be very special in people’s eyes.”

Certainly, although Lewis claims not to be interested in being the first to do something – “I’ve generally said ‘no, we’ll let you do it first and then, if it works, we’ll copy you’,” he says, honestly – beneath its comfortable, stable atmosphere, The Marlow Club is pushing forward with a raft of innovations that are setting it apart from the crowd.

In July 2009, the club installed a milon circuit – the first in the UK. Use of the circuit costs £6 a month on top of the monthly membership fee of £45-£76. One year on from its launch, when I visited the club, there were 569 members paying for milon, with a further 28 on their free month’s trial. During this time, the club monitors each member



The café is seen as a crucial service, encouraging members to view their club as ‘a place to be’

to make sure they’re using the circuit; if they are, Williams says the results will speak for themselves and ensure the member goes on to sign up for milon.

“But when it comes to creating secondary revenue channels, I believe you can only do it for something that’s genuinely unique and special,” Williams adds. “If you’re trying to charge members for something they should be getting for free, that’s when it goes very wrong.”

That rationale also applies to another UK first, launched at the club on 1 July 2010: Aquarino, an innovative electrolyte drink system from Germany. The machine – which works using fingerprint access – offers a choice of flavours, fewer calories than other low-cal electrolyte drinks, and high levels of hygiene thanks to a computer filtration system. It also works out cheaper than other bottled brands: members pay a £3.99 activation fee, which includes their own refillable bottle and a fingerprint scan, and then just £1.50 a week for the drink itself. An impressive 91 members had already signed up in week one.

So what about the baby scan room? Is that not a leap too far for a club with no recognised medical heritage? “We choose all our therapists very carefully,” says Lewis. “They’re not employed by us, but rather are all local therapists of high regard to whom we rent out space. They bring their client bases to us – people who may then join our club – but they’re also able

**“INDUSTRY CONSOLIDATION PROVIDES
AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDEPENDENTS
TO DIFFERENTIATE THEMSELVES”**



to generate business from among our existing 2,600 members.

"Equally importantly, because they already have that local reputation, having them operate from our club helps build our reputation and credibility."

Williams adds: "With the baby scan, we were approached by the company to ask if they could operate from our club. Marlow's a baby-booming town and the company's business is growing rapidly – not just baby scans but also other ultrasounds such as tests for cancer, ovarian cysts and so on. So we're building them a new area with its own waiting room to meet the demand. People seem to like coming to a health club for this sort of service – it's a lot more relaxed than walking into a hospital."

growing the core

And this is where we come back to Lewis' initial comments about growing a club's core membership. In developing your offering, he says, you have to identify the precise thing – what he calls a 'hot button' – that hooks each member in to becoming one of the club's steadfast core. So what constitutes a hot button? Lewis explains: "It could be anything – the baby scans, the beauty treatments, the café, the squash courts, the quiz nights, the crèche, the weight loss programme. You try things out and see what works – what it is that will make each individual member say: 'This is the place to be.'"

"IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE SECTOR GOING FORWARD, THE KEY OPPORTUNITY HAS TO BE RETENTION"

But, however forward-thinking the innovations at The Marlow Club, Williams is clear that the club's main USP is its friendliness. Lewis agrees: "How can clubs improve retention? It's very difficult because it's everything that happens – reputation, integrity, results, the welcome at the club. It's all of the things that make people want to go to a particular place and it has to permeate everything you do, every single day.

"But most crucial of all is friendship – between members, and between staff and members. People will leave clubs, but they won't leave their friends.

"And I think we're getting better all the time. I think, compared to most clubs, we're probably very good. But compared to our aspirations we're only OK – we still have a long way to go to be as good as we need and want to be. There are still too many members in that outer circle: people who don't know us and we don't know them. But I reckon our core is now over 1,000 – over 1,000 members who just won't leave – whereas I'd imagine a lot of clubs have only 100 or so.

"And of course our retention rates have improved as a result: over the course of last year, attrition dropped

by 9 per cent. At the start of 2009, we had 2,200 members, so that 9 per cent represents an additional 200 members who stayed with us. And by the end of the year, we'd grown to 2,400 members. If we hadn't improved our retention rates – if we'd lost those 200 members – sales would only have matched attrition and we'd still have had 2,200 members. No growth. There'd have been a lot less confidence in the business, and £100,000 less in membership fees going straight to the bottom line.

"Everyone talks about retention, of course, but almost no-one is any good at it. And the reason no-one's any good at it is because it's really difficult. You can't just put in a computerised system that suddenly makes retention better. There are things that can help, but essentially it's anything and everything you do, every day of the week, right across your whole business. So it's really hard. But I genuinely believe, if you're trying to identify the opportunities for the fitness industry going forward, that the key opportunity really is retention."



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testing, testing

Kate Cracknell explores the ways in which health clubs assess their members' exercise needs

Exercise prescription. It's a vital part of keeping members engaged and motivated – the creation of workout programmes designed specifically to get them the results they want. And yet, so often, members aren't given programmes at all: I myself have been told before now that, if I want a new programme, I have to pay for a personal training session. And even if a regularly refreshed programme is part of the membership deal, so often these seem to be generic workouts – 20 minutes of cardio, say, followed by three sets of 10 reps on a handful of machines.

So how can clubs do better in this key area? I visited a selection of sites to understand how different operators assess their members' fitness needs and, crucially, how they translate this information into a workout programme. In this, the first of a two-part series, we review the assessments offered by Nuffield Health and independent London-based operator Lifesmart (see also *HCM* March 10, p40).

NUFFIELD HEALTH health mot – cannon street club

ASSESSOR: matthew moulton, senior wellbeing advisor



THE ASSESSMENT: Included in the price of membership at Nuffield Health is a Health MOT and corresponding workout programme. New members can have a follow-up MOT after three months; if they've reached their targets, or simply maintained their status quo if this was already good, they're rewarded with a choice of two free personal training sessions, a month's free membership, or £75-worth of spa treatments.

The 60-minute MOT – delivered in a dedicated room by a senior wellbeing advisor – measures BMI, hip-waist ratio, resting heart rate, cholesterol and sugar levels (through pin-prick, on-the-spot blood tests) and blood pressure. It also, “very accurately” according to my wellbeing advisor Matt Moulton, calculates aerobic fitness (VO_2 max) while you're lying down through a combination of heart rate, heart rate variability at rest, self-assessed physical activity levels and body structure relating to weight and age – nice to be able to include this test

unobtrusively, within the assessment room, without having to pound on a treadmill. There's also a discussion of lifestyle, hydration, alcohol intake, sleep quality and any existing injuries.

Each area is assessed for a very specific reason – from the need for lower impact exercises for those with a high BMI, to avoiding weights over the head among those with high blood pressure, to the correlation between blood glucose levels and recommended heart rate – with a view to the creation of a tailored exercise programme.

All results are printed out at the end of the assessment. This is a 13-page report for the member to take away, complete with an explanation of each measurement and why it's important, as well as easy-to-understand comparison tables so you know what your results mean. These tables are colour-coded (green for OK, amber for some attention needed, red noting a problem area) and clearly detail what constitutes a good / average / poor result.

At the end, you're also given a coloured flag for the overall assessment: green meaning no contra-indications, amber suggesting a need for modified exercise or perhaps internal referral to a nutritionist or a PT, and red indicating a need for GP referral before exercise. The whole assessment, as Moulton explained, is based on four key pillars: “Detect, prevent, proactive action and recognition of limitations.”

Finally, your results are ranked against those of all 60,000 (and counting) MOTs conducted across the Nuffield Health estate so far, and you're given a score out of 100 to show how you fare compared to others in your age and gender groups.

THE PROGRAMME: This felt much more personalised than your average programme. My MOT had flagged no problems, but there were points raised during our discussions – particularly in the area of musculoskeletal and medical



Nuffield's 60-minute MOT is used to create a personalised workout programme



A score out of 100 is given to show how you compare to others in your age and gender groups

history – of relevance to programme design, and Moulton picked up on these. My programme included new exercises, all of which targeted muscle groups I agree should be focus areas for me. There was no sense of a standard set of exercises being rolled out, and it was also nice that Moulton took the time to go through the workout with me – not just a quick try of each exercise, but the full programme, so he could see how it worked and, if necessary, offer alternative exercises.

THE VERDICT: A thorough assessment, conducted very professionally – explained in detail, but made easy to understand, with a good balance between listening and telling and a workout programme that felt very tailored to me.

I found the health score a particularly interesting concept. I was in the top 30 per cent for my age and gender – good to know, and refreshing to find a system that recognises good performance as opposed to always demanding more of you. But of course this also provided motivation by letting me know how much better I could do... and now, with a programme tailored to address my specific areas for improvement, I felt I had the tools to do something about it.



► **LIFESMART**
biomechanical assessment (paul chek)
ASSESSOR: brett sanders, personal trainer



The Lifesmart testing system observes posture, breathing and diet as well as general fitness

THE ASSESSMENT: All members at Lifesmart complete an extensive questionnaire and consultation process before any specific services are recommended. I'd therefore provided a good deal of information by the time I did this biomechanical assessment and the process was seamless, with all relevant facts passed on to my assessor. This was then discussed in detail, going through my medical history and explaining what we'd be doing.

The assessment was an unusual experience, using implements that wouldn't have been out of place in a school maths lesson – gadgets not dissimilar to set squares and compasses. However, it wasn't awkward as it had all been explained – simply intriguing, and very different from any pre-exercise testing I've experienced. Every part of my body, every joint, was measured for its range of movement compared to normal parameters – but with no discomfort, as the body was never pushed to go further than it naturally could. The process took two hours, with 12 pages of detailed measurements taken.

Even before I received the subsequent programme, it was clear my assessor

had identified areas of weakness of which I was already aware (tightness in the upper back, excessive range of movement in the lower back, problematic left shoulder, hyper-mobility in my hamstrings and so on), as well as picking up on more besides.

THE PROGRAMME: The report and programme, a bound copy of which was given to me on a return visit to the club a week later, began with a summary of my posture, including any problem areas – as well as, interestingly, observations regarding breathing and diet that could be impacting on my posture and my general ability to exercise.

There were also general recommendations which were significantly more holistic than might be expected from a workout programme – a key part of my initial programme focused on breathing, both to relax hyperactive muscles and to support my adrenal system which (correctly, as a subsequent test confirmed) Sanders suggested was under stress. An impressive all-round analysis.

The resulting programme was very specific, designed to strengthen the

muscles that were too flexible and work on flexibility in areas of tightness. I was given an initial routine of stretching and stability only – strength would come later once a solid foundation of stability had been built. The programme was pinpoint in its targeting of specific muscles/muscle groups, consisting of six to eight exercises each for stretching and stability which honed in on developing strength and flexibility in my back, stretching through my shoulders and so on. So correct was it in identifying my needs that I've since been to see an osteopath about the same issues, to speed the process along.

THE VERDICT: Highly personalised and pinpointing precise needs in the body, this was a fascinating approach. Far from being an either/or, this sort of assessment could act as the perfect complement to a more traditional wellness check such as the Nuffield MOT. Members pay £275 for the assessment and programme.



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DIGEST: MEMBERS WILL
ACCEPT YOUR ADVICE IF
THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT
THEY'RE BEING TOLD"**

KEEPING IT REAL

As with the Nuffield MOT, making results easy for members to digest is an important consideration. Don't blind them with science: they're much more likely to buy into your recommendations if they understand what they're being told.

- Showcased at the IHRSA European Congress at the end of 2009, but not yet available in the UK, is the Polar BodyAge system – a computerised fitness assessment machine that measures strength, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, body fat percentage, blood pressure and total body water. The results are presented as an age; if that age is older than you actually are, you have some work to do!
- The InBody analyser is used by a number of operators, including Greens. Members simply stand on the machine, their feet on metal plates and holding metal arms, and small electrical impulses are sent around the body. An in-depth body composition analysis – covering everything from weight to body strength to the lean balance across the body – takes just

30 seconds. Probably one of my favourite measures, though, is the basal metabolic rate. Members are only human and will eat the wrong things sometimes; telling them how many calories their body burns on a daily basis, without exercising, will at least help them understand when they need to get down the gym to burn off the excesses of the weekend.

- Movers & Shapers has a touch-screen kiosk at all its sites. Known as The Lab, this quickly and unobtrusively measures the member's weight, blood pressure, resting heart rate and body fat percentage – it features an inbuilt scale, infra-red fat sensor and blood pressure cuff. The results are presented using a simple traffic light system whereby green means 'no problem', amber means just a few small

tweaks needed, and red flags up an area that needs addressing. Members are re-measured every six weeks to track progress, but can also test themselves in the interim as the easy-to-use Lab is set up to be self-service.

- At the more technical end of the scale is the Fitmate PRO from fitnessASSIST. Designed to measure VO₂ max and resting metabolic rate, the idea is nevertheless to make sport science testing accessible to everyone. With this in mind, the software package automatically generates an exercise prescription for the individual based on their results, with an accompanying library of exercises and diagrams that can be used to educate the client. The analyser can be hired out by health clubs and personal trainers.

In the next issue, we'll review the fitness assessment process at Fitness First, as well as looking at the V-Check machine, which is already being used in clubs across the Netherlands



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brand scheme of things

Branding is mostly unsophisticated or simply non-existent in the health and fitness industry, says brand strategy expert Simon Middleton. He explains the huge potential for companies that can leave their mark on customers' hearts and minds

In a competitive industry, building a powerful and sustainable brand is a vital strategy for your business. It's not about expensive advertising or funky logos – the spectacularly successful and slick semiotics of the Nike swoosh or iconic four Audi rings, for example. These are powerful images, but they are merely symbols that trigger memories of the more deeply embedded brand message.

Your brand is what your company means to the world: the collection of all the possible meanings that any

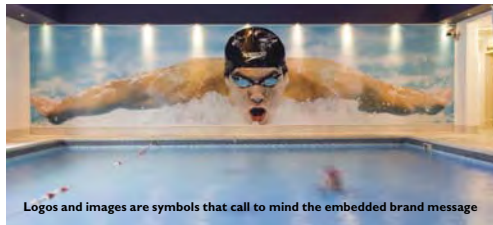
customer, or potential customer, carries around in their head and heart about your organisation. Get it right and it will attract new customers, keep them coming back and motivate them to tell others about your business too.

Take a world-class brand like Nike. Millions of people around the world, whatever their cultural background or geographic location, share a little package of thoughts and feelings about this organisation. When describing it they say similar things: sports, achievement, premium quality, design, hip-hop. It has an authentic, compelling and distinctive meaning. But with the right strategy, any company can build a strong brand – whatever their size and budget.

health & fitness lags behind

Retail is already awash with strong brands, but it seems to me that the fitness industry is lagging behind. It may be growing – with the FIA reporting growth for the 10th consecutive year – but it's still relatively unsophisticated when it comes to branding.

This is because the industry trades most often on geography (a club is in



Logos and images are symbols that call to mind the embedded brand message



The Third Space in Soho is an upmarket gym that was "intended to be a brand, not just a name"



the neighbourhood) or on features (we've got more, and more modern, machines than anyone else), or on price (free trials, special offers and so on). The marketplace hasn't had to worry too much about brand issues in the past, because in the regions – and to some extent even in London – people have traditionally just used a health club or gym that's nearby. Where competition has existed, the main response among businesses seems to have been around price, free trials, cutting deals, and bragging about new kit or being bigger.

But being handy, being cheap and having more stuff or more space, or even being open longer, are commodity factors, not brand factors. As competition increases and more players come into the market, the successful businesses will stand apart because of the emotional impact they make – in other words, their brand narrative. The implications for those that are perceived to be old-fashioned, unreasonably expensive or boring will be that they will lose customers.

With just 12 per cent population penetration, there's clearly an

the third space: a model of good branding

This club in London's Soho drips with cool and attitude, and in my opinion is dramatically more engaging than any other offering in the market. It may be upmarket, but there's no reason to assume that this is only achievable in an elite, expensive gym.

Building a great brand is not about the size of the company; if you have 100 customers who share a set of meanings about your company, then you've got a strong brand. It's about engaging people in narrative and imagination and emotion. The Third Space does that right off the bat, starting with its great name.

The business is built around the idea that work is your first space, home is your second and this gym is your third space. It's billed as "an alternative space dedicated to a new form of healthy hedonism, a unique concept of 21st century living".

Individual membership costs £124 a month and a second club is planned for Marylebone in 2011.

MD Eric Dunmore says: "The Third Space was a new entry to the market and was focused on the individual, customer service, fun, convenience, quality and variety.

"From its inception, it was intended to be a brand as opposed to a 'name' – place names such as Holmes Place, Cannons or Soho Gyms, or people names such as David Lloyd and Bannatyne. Nor did we want it to be 'something' – a descriptor like 'health & fitness' as in LA Fitness, Fitness First, or the Health & Racquets tag. It was our view that a real brand did not exist in the UK when we started.

"These goals gave us the platform for the brand and a tangible set of values to work from, and measure ourselves against, from day one."

opportunity for somebody to do something clever and imaginative. There's absolutely no loyalty in the sector, except for that artificially created by membership contracts. The winners from here on in will be those clubs that people really want to join.

budget sector

In the budget sector, many clubs remain trapped in generic messages about price and never find a true brand. There's no emotional engagement of any kind, nothing to get excited about. It's fine to go budget, but you still need an engaging brand, otherwise you'll fall victim to the first person who beats you on price – or worse, you get trapped in a price war.

To my mind, the company that stands out in the value sector is nuyuu – a completely brand-led new business with a real differentiator: fair pricing and a down-to-earth attitude. Indeed, its backer James Caan, of *Dragons' Den* fame, says on its homepage: "Frankly, the sector is ripe for a bit of a shake-up and nuyuu is a compelling proposition."

It's a kind of Innocent Drinks theory applied to the fitness industry, even down to the copy style and story of how it started. And with James Caan's backing it could do very well indeed. There's some really bold design thinking going on here. Arguably, although small, this is the one company that looks and feels like a 21st century ►

The Third Space – “more engaging than any other offering in the market” – and LA Fitness’ modern, bright brand attitude

► brand. It meets all the criteria: authentic attitude and brand promise, highly differentiated pricing and positioning, compelling narrative and tone of voice, and distinctive design.

major players

Elsewhere in the industry, many of the major players haven't even begun to build a brand that talks to the hearts and minds of customers. Most have a dull and unengaging image, devoid of meaning and narrative.

LA Fitness has more brand attitude and a more appealing website than many of its competitors. Modern, bright and upbeat, the strapline “We'll get there together” is a good one – collaborative, non-judgemental and positive.

However, Virgin Active is for me the most engaging and appealing as a brand statement. Virgin's ad campaigns for its clubs have used some of the sexiness and sassiness that characterise the Virgin brand in general. It's in the tone of voice. “Wanna join?” “More pleasure. Less pain.” “Activate your life.”

David Lloyd Leisure takes another approach to branding, drawing on tradition and quality. Its image is professional and smart and does a good job of communicating meaning. It's the closest the sector comes to a heritage brand, well established and trusted.

However, while a handful of companies are stepping up to the challenge of branding, most aren't even in the starters' blocks and few are talking to the huge numbers of non-gym goers who wouldn't dream of setting foot in the alien environment of a health club.

how to build your brand

- Create a powerful and authentic brand story – this is the single most important element in branding and will set you apart from competitors
- Brand isn't the same as promotion. It's the ability to create 'meanings' in heads and hearts. Brand is about desire, not just need; to succeed, your business must create desire
- Brand is about being authentic. Talk realistically about outcomes and the experience of your club
- Brand is about being highly distinctive. Far too many gym companies are generic. There's a massive opportunity to stand out from the crowd in terms of the experience and the presentation
- Brand is about being compelling: telling a story that has emotional punch and captures the imagination

- Joining a club is perceived as expensive – the cliché is that once you sign up you can't get out, and that most members never attend. That may or may not be true, but perception is powerful stuff. That perception needs to change
- Health clubs are seen as scary and intimidating places in which people feel inadequate from the outset. Again that may not be true, but for a huge untapped market that's the case. There's a real opportunity for a club brand which tears down those psychological barriers
- Customers are confined to 'the place' itself. There's a real opportunity for clubs to reach out into activities and narratives that people can carry into their homes and lives

Curves is one operator that's taking on this challenge, targeting the vast numbers of women who want to lose weight, but who wouldn't otherwise attend a gym. It's an appealing brand name, a good place to start. There's definitely a brand strategy at work here, but this risks becoming diluted in the individual clubs which can look a bit homespun and less professional. Nevertheless, there's a brand idea here and one that could have greater potential.

However, it would still seem to me that the way is clear for companies that work to establish brand values and a clear positioning to eat into

others' market share and attract new population segments. There's huge potential in the industry to bring brands to life and attract and engage customers.



simon middleton – ‘the brand strategy guru’ – is an independent brand adviser and brand leadership fellow at the university of east anglia

HCN has three copies of Simon Middleton's book – *Build a Brand in 30 Days* – to give away free to our readers. Copies will go to the first three emails received – email us at healthclub@leisuremedia.com



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fight club



Pete Hayman investigates the boom in the mixed martial arts market

The first rule of Fight Club is you do not talk about Fight Club” – this the blunt directive issued by the subversive Tyler Durden to members of his illicit fighting club in Chuck Palahniuk’s confrontational novel-cum-film *Fight Club*.

Fight Club may well be entrenched within the confines of Palahniuk’s fictional world, but if the film intended to suggest there was something of a taboo in ‘normal’ people fighting, it would be inaccurate: we’re now witnessing a growing trend of fitness facilities offering mixed martial arts (MMA) and boxing as a new way of losing weight and/or keeping fit, as well as purging some of the stresses of daily life.

London Fight Factory, London Shootfighters, TitanFighter MMA Academy – these are just some of the facilities that offer this form of training, and whose adverts have started appearing on the London Underground and on billboards, presenting themselves as an alternative means of keeping fit.

back to basics

Any preconceptions of combat sports can certainly be challenged by these new offerings; the range of training provided at MMA and boxing clubs, as well as some national

fitness chains, means that anyone is able to challenge themselves and participate in what’s increasingly seen as an effective means of exercising.

Former personal trainer and fitness instructor Erica Burlace is a new recruit to the world of combat sports and believes there are some key elements helping to drive the recent growth in this area. “Our lives are full of technological advances and this almost barbaric way of training is a great form of release from that, with a ‘back to basics’ approach and cheaper membership fees,” she says. “I think the fact that sport is evermore present on our TV screens and in our lives with the Olympics drive has also driven the growth in this sector.

“It’s also a type of fitness training that can really be applied, rather than simply training to look good. It’s great on every level. The movements involved in pad work use your agility, strength, core, power, cardio and co-ordination.”

London Shootfighters opened in 1997 in Park Royal, well before the recent flurry of new MMA sites. Initially set up as a training club for a specific group of fighters, it’s now developed into a multi-faceted site offering structured classes across a number of different disciplines. The facility retains a conventional fitness element, including Precor resistance and CV machines monitored by FitLinxx. But this sits alongside a more focused provision of free weights, an ‘old school’ strong man room with Atlas stones and log lifts, a boxing room with an Olympic-sized ring and an Ultimate Fighting cage.

Other MMA clubs offer simpler facilities, removing the reliance on equipment and offering a back-to-basics emphasis on interaction with other people.

“The gym I signed up to – Box Fitness, in Worcester – consists of a striped back double unit with soft-floor matting, painted brick walls, floor-to-ceiling mirrors and basic body weight and strength training exercise,” says Burlace. “There are no televisions, no commercial advertising sites, no vending machines – just a simple music system.

“There’s very little equipment but you can buy or borrow skipping ropes, gloves and hand wraps and it’s recommended, almost immediately, that you invest in your own gear.”

Ultimate warrior Diesel’s facilities include the Ultimate Fighting Cage, or ‘Octagon’, as it’s known



Boxing clever Fitness First offers boxing and martial arts classes, using specialist freelance instructors

She continues: "The consumer has heightened expectations on every level. We know what we should be getting for our money and we want it. However, I feel that the industry on the whole is misguided in what we 'actually' want. I don't want to pay for flatscreen TVs or state-of-the-art lighting sequences – I want to pay for expertise."

people focus

And this is where the MMA clubs come into their own, providing users with the sort of facilities, training and service they might not receive at a conventional fitness club.

London-based Diesel Gym operates two facilities, in Canary Wharf and Limehouse, and founder and owner Cliff Bura believes it's the people aspect that plays a crucial part in encouraging new members to join up. "We don't trade on facilities and plush changing rooms, but on our people," he says. "For example, [at a traditional health club] you can pay £40 a session with a personal trainer who has recently qualified with a NVQ. At Diesel Gym, for the same price, you can train with someone who has either trained people to world-level competitive standards or competed themselves at that standard."

It's an element that Burlace also believes is important to the emergence, and arguably acceptance, of boxing and MMA clubs: "A gym should offer a training programme, a full induction and assessment, and staff support for members," she says. "However, I've watched an elderly gentleman do next to nothing in a standard gym as he couldn't use the equipment. There was nobody on-hand to help. This is not an isolated case but it is isolated in its acceptance. We wouldn't tolerate this in any other industry; heaven forbid there was no-one on-hand to change a dress to a different size when in a fitting room, or to bring you a new napkin in a restaurant."

Although clubs like London Shootfighters include gym areas in which members can work out alone, the general principle of the new breed of MMA club is that all sessions are highly supervised. Many offer only one-to-one personal training or group sessions led by an instructor, thereby guaranteeing a certain level of individual attention. Even in those where members can work out alone, such as Box Fitness, an instructor is always present, walking around and giving individual guidance as members do circuits.

staff qualifications

One issue that perhaps remains unclear amid the growth in boxing and MMA training is an apparent lack of a coherent structure for accrediting instructors. Many, like those at



Mixed martial arts is still in its infancy as a sport, and some people are coaching without accreditation

London Shootfighters and Diesel Gym, have experience in high-level competition that is now being applied in a training capacity. Bura, however, remains cautious regarding where the sector needs to go in terms of qualifications.

"MMA as a sport is still in its infancy despite its rocketing success," he says. "MMA instructors should really be qualified instructors from other martial arts, such as Thai boxing or Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. However, there's a growing proliferation of people coaching without any accreditation at all, who've simply trained themselves across a number of martial arts – not something I particularly agree with."

"I've had a recent discussion with some people who are connected with the State of Nevada sporting commission, who ▶

are trying to create an MMA governing body over there. Once something like that is set up, then obviously standards can be put in place, but that's a long way away. In the meantime, I'd recommend any high street gym think twice and properly investigate anyone they're thinking of hiring to coach their members in the sport."

In terms of boxing, at least, there's already a means to become accredited – and training provider Fight Fit has reported a "huge increase" in the number of instructors achieving a Level 1 Certificate in Boxing Instruction.

Fight Fit managing director Martin McKenzie explains that participants are well drilled in how to offer boxing training in a safe and effective manner, but also in the need to interact with members: "In addition to showing boxing tuition skills, equipment and safety guidelines, Fight Fit also provides instructors with advanced communications skills, which enable them to inspire members," he says.

growth in demand

Fight Fit also offers personal training courses for individuals looking to use boxing as a means to exercise themselves. While not in direct competition with some of the more MMA-driven clubs such as London Shootfighters and Diesel Gym, it's yet another illustration of the growing demand for combat training that's beginning to permeate the fitness sector.

Indeed, according to McKenzie, the number of people signing up to the company's boxing-based group and personal training across the UK has tripled in the last three years, which he puts down to individuals "searching for something new – a different and more exciting way of getting fitter and in shape."

He continues: "Our team spends a lot of time getting feedback from gym users across the country and we're finding

People want a service outside the usual spectrum - to learn new skills and interact with people, not just machines

that our courses offer members what they want: a service outside the usual spectrum of gym classes. They want to learn new skills and interact with people, not only machinery."

London Shootfighters' head instructor Paul Ivens has also seen an increase in the number of people turning to boxing, MMA and other combat sports recently, as well as a growth in the number of sites offering such training methods, and believes that word of mouth is an important aspect in attracting new users.

"We operate mainly through reputation," he says. "Our members performing well in competition has always been our best form of advertising. Other than that, running an accessible website that registers highly in search functions is important."

Ivens also reveals that London Shootfighters is looking at the possibility of opening new branches next year in response to an expected continued growth in demand, but this is not an approach that's mirrored across the sector: Diesel Gym, for example, is not looking to expand, a decision which Bura says is motivated by a desire to protect its current offer.

"Both our clubs run completely different martial arts, to maximise our timetable and not overlap on our services," explains Bura. "No future expansion is planned at this moment; trying to develop a 'McDiesel' attitude to our business would only harm and dilute our brand."

His model is clearly a successful one, however. Although the Diesel gyms opened two years ago, just as the recession was taking hold, and occupy a "huge space in two of the most expensive areas in London" – and although they're open for only four hours a day, as Bura runs the clubs in his spare time – they are, he says, both making money.

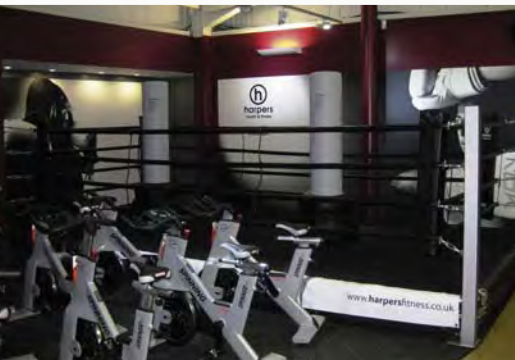
And MMA and boxing facilities are not restricted to London alone; major UK cities including Birmingham, Glasgow, Bristol and Manchester have seen clubs set up to provide this style of training.

chain reaction

It's perhaps no surprise, then, that national gym chains are also now looking towards this area as a potential addition to their offering.

Fitness First is one operator that currently offers boxing and martial arts programmes, with specialist freelance instructors brought in to deliver the training. "We're always evaluating what's new and innovative in the group exercise world," explains Keith Selwood, national training and development manager for Fitness First. "We've recently worked with an MMA instructor who has helped us launch a trial MMA class into

Get in the ring Leisure Connection has installed boxing rings at two of its sites, including Wyboston (left)





Ready to rumble Leisure Connection's Dorking site installed a boxing ring after noting an uplift in interest in this area

some of our clubs, and we're currently assessing the success of this class with our members."

It's an area that Selwood acknowledges has seen an increase in popularity, but it will be the success of the MMA class trials that will influence whether the chain takes any steps to expand the offer going forward.

"This is a fairly specialist training area, so I don't think we'd ever replace rows of treadmills with boxing rings," he explains. "However, we plan to continue being at the forefront of whatever's new and popular, providing the facilities our members want."

Elsewhere, Leisure Connection has capitalised on a perceived increase in the use of boxing as part of its training programmes. Two boxing rings have now been installed across its estate to cater for growing demand. But, like Fitness First, it's not something that will be widely implemented at the expense of other facilities.

Head of commercial development Kevin Yates explains: "We still offer hundreds of other classes and training approaches to suit individual needs and capabilities. We would never push a member or customer to try a type of training or class they weren't comfortable with. It's an interesting time and we will certainly be monitoring this area, but at the moment we're comfortable with the provision we have. We cannot compete with specialist and dedicated boxing provisions, and we wouldn't want to. We aim to offer something for everyone."

From students and the unemployed to bankers, lawyers and company directors, there's no typical demographic

broader appeal

Saying that, increasingly the appeal of MMA seems to be extending beyond the traditional, rather limited, audience; among the national chains and the independent specialists, there appears to be a broad consensus that boxing and MMA has become a more sought-after means of training in general, no longer dominated by alpha-males.

"We have a good mix of sexes and age groups at Diesel Gym," explains Bura. "From students and the unemployed to bankers, lawyers and company directors, there's no typical demographic." However, Ivens admits that, while London Shootfighters strives to be inclusive to all, "the nature of the interest in some of the sports taught mean there's a bias towards men between the ages of 20 and 40."

"Of course they have a target audience and marketing campaigns will have concentrated efforts," admits Burlace, "but the male-dominated environment is no longer a barrier to broader participation. We all need a release."

In that respect, the need for a release, perhaps there are some similarities with Palahniuk's fictional fighting institution.



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the new model

Shoshana Kazab reports on the latest club opening from The Gym Group

Value for money UK health and fitness chain The Gym Group opened its largest site, located in the heart of Birmingham's city centre, in July. The site brings the group's portfolio to eight.

The new club is located at the top of a building 350 yards from the Bullring shopping and leisure centre, offering views over the city. The 2,044sq m (22,000 sq ft) club is laid out over two floors and, like the others in the chain, is a gym-only concept, with a 200-station fitness suite kitted out by Matrix Fitness – there's no studio and no provision for food and beverages.

"Before we opened our first club, we carried out extensive research into what facilities were top of people's lists when considering whether or not to join a health club," says John Treharne, founder and CEO of The Gym Group. "Most people said they wanted a high-quality gym. We listened to what they had to say and launched a gym-only chain of clubs. It's a decision we've never looked back on."

The new Birmingham club offers a range of top-end equipment from Matrix, including the 5x CV series, the G3 strength series and Functional Trainers, which are proving particularly popular among personal trainers.

But in spite of this high-quality offering, monthly membership costs just £14.99, with no joining fee and no contract. Alternatively, customers can opt for a day membership at a cost of £5. This affordable approach certainly seems to be working: there's currently a waiting list to join The Gym Group's club in Vauxhall, south London, for example.

"I'm not going to give all of our secrets away, but it's our unique business model that allows us to charge so little," says Treharne.

He continues: "One of our main differences is the fact that we don't require members to sign a contract with us. I strongly disagree with the concept of membership by compulsion. I prefer to let people try out a gym without committing to a year."

This move has worked in the company's favour: around 50 per cent of members across all their clubs have never been members of a gym before. Given the industry's drive to get more people more active, it's an impressive statistic – even more so when you consider that The Gym Group's retention rate is reportedly comparable with the rest of the sector.

"We offer flexibility to people who are time-restricted," continues Treharne – all of The Gym Group's clubs offer 24/7

access. "The 24/7 operating hours are not a gimmick: this is what people want," stresses Treharne.

staffing model

The Gym Group's staffing model also helps ensure costs are kept to a minimum – but without compromising on service. Treharne explains: "We contract out most of our non-core services, so we're able to reduce the administrative structure behind our processes."

Meanwhile, taking inspiration from the low-cost airline industry, most of The Gym Group's administration is carried out online. People can take out a membership or make changes to their account – for example, updating their bank account details – at any time. "Instead of getting bogged down with paperwork, our staff are free to dedicate their time to our members on the gym floor, offering a higher level of service than they would get elsewhere," says Treharne.

There's also a cost-effective measure in place to ensure there's always a member of staff on the gym floor, excluding out of hours times: personal trainers are allowed to keep 100 per cent of their income but, in return, must give The Gym Group 10 hours of their time. This can be spent carrying out inductions or simply keeping an eye



Enter the Matrix
The 200-station Birmingham club is exclusively kitted out by Matrix Fitness





Simply quality The Gym Group takes its inspiration from the low-cost airlines, providing what people want – but with no frills

on members and making themselves available for any questions.

"We're doing something that's completely different from the rest of the market and the fact is, it's working," says Treharne. "I believe we attract the best personal trainers in the industry and we have an incredibly low attrition rate when it comes to our PTs, mainly because they're introduced to so many potential customers" – the company's clubs typically open with around 4,000 members and a similar figure is estimated for Birmingham, with a broad demographic profile that includes students, young professionals and first-time gym users.

"As our members are paying only £14.99 a month for their membership, they can afford to try out a personal trainer," adds Treharne.

Matrix Fitness also provides support for this staffing model.

"We provide a full service agreement for The Gym Group," says Daniel Clayton, vice president of international development at Matrix Fitness.

"This means that we take responsibility for the kit, ensuring it's regularly serviced and maintained to the highest standards. Staff don't have to worry about repairing the kit in the event that something goes wrong, leaving them free to focus on their members."

web focus

Matrix Fitness not only supplies equipment to all of The Gym Group's sites, but also helps with the content of the all-important website. "Our relationship with The Gym Group is very much a partnership," says Clayton.



I believe we attract the best PTs in the industry and we have an incredibly low attrition rate

"We work closely with John and his team in terms of the product mix at each club, suggesting how the staff should be trained and, most recently, providing input for a film about the club that will be featured on The Gym Group's website.

"This virtual tour is a very popular feature on the site and we work with the group's web developers to ensure the walk-throughs are as realistic as possible, offering a high-quality 3D experience. Prospective customers are encouraged to take an online tour of the club they're interested in, making the website the main reference point in terms of information."

Indeed, the website is an integral feature when it comes to the operation of the clubs in general, and the result is

a highly efficient and environmentally-friendly process, with no paper trail at all. The proof that the website works lies in the figures: The Gym Group has more than 100,000 hits on its site each month (and rising) and, in June, had a peak of 6,000 hits in a single day.

However, finding an off-the-shelf website to cope with such high levels of traffic and usage proved difficult. The solution was the development of a bespoke software package, created by internet marketing company White Hat Media. "The Gym Group's supporting website needed to be at the cutting edge of technology in order for the project to work," says Jeremy Spiller MD of White Hat Media. "We created a new package that would allow them to set up a completely paperless ▶

Practical design Entry is via a glass portal, activated using an eight-digit code, while location of the changing rooms was the first concern

- membership system and operate it on a robust and fast platform."

design considerations

The Gym Group worked with leisure specialist architects Zynk Design on the design and fit-out of the Birmingham club. "Birmingham was a challenge as it's located on the second and third floors of a building and is accessible via a staircase or lift, so a key focus was ensuring the customer journey was simplified," says Stavros Theodoulou, MD of Zynk Design.

"In terms of planning for the space, the primary objective was to determine the most appropriate location for the changing rooms – one that not only met the client's operational requirements, but that also worked within the confines of the existing building services. Once this area had been allocated, we were then free to work on the gym itself."

Zynk Design worked closely with Matrix Fitness in terms of the layout of the equipment, particularly since the gym is laid out over two floors. For example, the noise and vibration created by a free weights area can often be a concern, so at Birmingham this is located in the least sensitive part of the building. Acoustic padding and additional layers of flooring were also laid down to minimise vibrations and noise transfer.

Although the club is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it's not staffed throughout the night. Members are therefore given a unique eight-digit PIN code that allows them to enter the club at any time. Access and security services are delivered by Vistec Systems, a specialist security consultant contractor that's worked with The Gym Group since the launch of the first club. "We've



devised a glass portal for access to the Birmingham club," says Dean Hawkins, sales director at Vistec Systems.

"Members enter their unique code and access is restricted to them alone. It won't be long before other clubs take this concept on, as it allows sites to stay open throughout the night – securely and with minimal running costs."

Vistec Systems has also fitted the Birmingham club with a number of CCTV cameras, strategically positioned throughout the facility. There are a number of help points too, monitored out of hours by Vistec Systems, to which members can go for assistance

if necessary. The CCTV cameras, help points and PIN codes are also all constantly recorded by Vistec Systems.

the future

With eight clubs now up and running, The Gym Group's story doesn't end here. The operator is due to open three more sites this year – in Plymouth, Nottingham and West Hampstead (London) – with plans for a further 12 gyms in 2011, between 12 and 15 sites in 2012, and a view to having 50 gyms open by 2013.



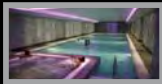
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Athena Locker Range unveiled by Garran

Garran Leisure Solutions' new Athena lockers range features two key design concepts. The first – Athena Line Lockers – has been designed with plant-on doors to ensure a smooth finish. The second – Athena Edge Locker – has robust inset doors and was created with security as a key focus. Both ranges are available in a wide variety of colours, are easy to maintain and are built with aluminium bodies for durability.

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garran

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For more information, or to contact any of these companies, log on to www.fitness-kit.net and type the company name under 'keyword search'

New glass feature doors from CQL

Craftsman Quality Lockers' (CQL) glass feature doors can be easily installed within a line of lockers. Clients can choose from Tiffany window-style displays to promote a single product or a series of reflective glass doors in a variety of colours that are installed using a mounting system that greatly reduces the risk of doors shattering.



fitness-kit.net keywords
craftsman quality lockers



fitness-kit.net keywords
link lockers

Wet environment range from Link Lockers

Link Lockers' Aquarius range of bespoke-designed lockers and cubicles has been created to help ensure that wet or damp environments are properly equipped to meet customers' needs. The lockers also feature a hygienic BioCote® protective finish.

Transforming locker rooms with Ridgeway

One of Ridgeway Furniture's recent installations, at Esporta Dorset, focused on an economical and environmentally-friendly revamp of the locker room. Retaining many original materials, Ridgeway kept the locker carcasses but installed high quality walnut veneer doors.



fitness-kit.net keyword
ridgeway

ON THE MOVE

Prompted by increased public awareness of wellbeing, the rise of the spa holiday has represented one of the most significant travel trends of the past 15 years. But while hotels have grown reputations on the basis of their spas, what role has fitness played in this holistic health-driven market? Certainly hotel gyms have long been perceived as an essential service for business travellers. Yet as the fitness industry has developed and broadened its reach, have hoteliers responded by updating their facilities and modernising the way in which they present their offer? Could hotels be positioned as fitness destinations in their own right?

"Fitness and travel go hand in hand, and our guests have told us that working out is a priority," says Sheraton's senior vice president, brand management, Hoyt Harper. This is one of the reasons why Sheraton has taken the step of partnering with Core Performance – a US-based training brand led by experts who work with professional athletes – to launch a fitness initiative across more than 400 of its hotels.

Announced in December 2008, Sheraton Fitness comprises services designed exclusively by Core Performance for guests who want to stay fit on the road. In practical terms,

How can hoteliers transform their fitness offering into a unique selling point – and more?

Neena Dhillon investigates

this means the hotel group is in the process of updating all its gyms to first-class fitness centres that feature Life Fitness machines and time-efficient training programmes outlined in detail on wall signage. Routines such as the 20-minute Power Boost are also explained on the Sheraton Fitness website, which offers nutritional and training advice that can be downloaded at any time. Other forthcoming elements include dining menus marked with the Core Performance nutrition logo for healthy meal choices, and a free Gym-In-A-Bag kit, including a flip-book of training routines, massage stick, foam roller and resistance tube, ideal for in-room workouts.

"Sheraton Fitness is one component of a comprehensive effort to revitalise the brand and differentiate the guest

experience," continues Harper, who is reticent on the subject of the initiative's cost. While the majority of the services will be complimentary for guests, a minority of hotels will continue to charge minimal fees for gym access. By the end of 2010, more than 100 Sheraton properties worldwide will have introduced the programme, which marks the first time Core Performance has collaborated with a hotel group to develop customised, professional training for travellers. Sheraton's plans involve an eventual international rollout.

FITNESS AS A USP

Meanwhile, select US hotels have already shown how individual properties can carve out a fitness niche. Gravity fitness centre – a 1,394sq m (15,000sq ft) gym with racquetball courts, cardio and strength training areas, indoor pool and almost 70 group classes per week – is owned and run by Le Parker Meridien in New York. Hotel guests pay US\$10 (£6.30) a day to access the centre and attend any of the classes, while a busy local membership is marketed at US\$120 (£76) a month with no joining fee.

The hotel actively promotes its signature workout, The Quickie, on its website, through in-room literature and national media. The nine-exercise workout takes between 11 and 27 minutes to complete – perfect for time-poor New Yorkers and business travellers. An initial PT session takes all clients through the workout, personalising their settings via the club's FitLinxx system, at no additional cost.

Reflecting on why the hotel continually invests in Gravity (all cardio equipment was updated in 2009), director of public relations Marisa Zafran comments: "So many hotels pride themselves on their spas but not many have top-notch fitness offerings. A centre like Gravity provides



Sheraton Fitness (left) will have been introduced at more than 100 hotels by the end of the year



Le Parker Meridien runs the Gravity fitness centre in New York (above and right)

a good point of separation between our property and others. However, you have to have a product that's innovative." Zafran says that guests return to the hotel as a result of their Gravity experience, as evidenced by customer feedback and clients making reservations for additional services such as private indoor cycling sessions immediately after booking their rooms.

Identified as one of the country's best hotel gyms by *Men's Health* magazine, Ocean Spa's fitness facility at Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel underwent a renovation in 2009 to include Technogym and Cybex equipment, Expresso bikes and a studio for more than 30 group classes a week, ranging from body sculpting to pilates. Clients comprise hotel guests paying a daily fee and local residents who can choose between two levels of resort membership, although both include access to classes, the gym and the outdoor pool.

Ocean Spa & Fitness is run by Plus One Health Management, while State of the Heart Fitness, a local team of trainers



and exercise physiologists, provides programming – both personal training and group exercise. Recent programming examples for members include a Beach Boot Camp Day, aimed at small private groups at an additional cost.

"Plus One has extensive experience in health club and spa management with which to grow our membership base and increase revenues," responds spa director David Brown when asked why the hotel chose not to manage the facility directly. "We see our gym as an important amenity because it draws in groups, is often a deciding factor for individual travellers, and is open to the local community."

However, although the hotel promotes Ocean as a selling point both



online and in print, Brown is careful to distinguish Loews from a fitness destination. He explains: "The term 'fitness destination' can be misleading because, when people hear this term, they visualise a sprawling resort with specific, week-long programmes. We're more of a vacation hotel for business travellers, with people coming to town to do other things, rather than focus specifically on fitness. Having said that, our guests are very health-conscious and require an upmarket experience."

FITNESS DESTINATIONS

A resort that can safely be termed a 'fitness destination', Rancho La Puerta in Mexico, is one of the pioneers of holistic fitness and is renowned for its week-

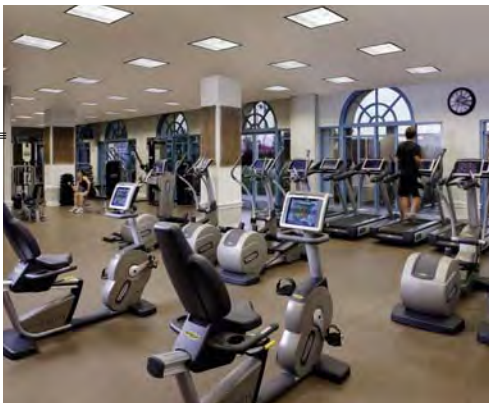
Ocean Spa & Fitness at Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel was voted one of America's best hotel gyms

► long programme that provides a choice of three to five classes/activities every hour from dawn 'til dusk. The variety is unparalleled, with options including mountain hikes, pilates reformer sessions, circuit training, cardio boxing, dance, a swim clinic and Feldenkrais.

Guests can take advantage of a complimentary Navigator consultation on arrival, which involves a member of the fitness staff helping to plan their week in response to their fitness levels and expectations. Some services are charged at an additional fee, including one-on-one personal training and spa therapies, but most activities are covered by the weekly all-inclusive rate.

Director of communications Peter Jensen says: "We virtually invented the fitness resort concept and this emphasis definitely sets us apart, since it sends a clear message that this is not solely a place to be pampered. We welcome approximately 125 guests a week, averaging 50 per cent repeat custom throughout the year. By and large, our guests are healthy before they come to the ranch – they see us as more of a check-up than a weight-loss experience."

While 21 full-time fitness staff are employed, guest instructors also visit during speciality weeks focused on particular disciplines, such as pilates or the Bar Method. Jensen confirms that the resort's marketing plan relies first and foremost on word of mouth, but he does offer the following advice: "Be careful not to market yourself as



too much of a 'programme' that must be adhered to, because you may be rebranded as a place populated by a niche customer. Our guests are never told what to do – they're simply given options and expert guidance."

The 11,610sq m (125,000sq ft) Houstonian Club in Texas, meanwhile, has carved out a reputation in the US for its fitness campus that caters for the corporate market. Club general manager Mark Stevens says: "Since setting out in the late 1970s to develop an executive wellness destination, we've aimed to create premium facilities that are attractive to CEOs and other high-income guests who work, live in or visit

the corporate city of Houston." The success of the original concept, which comprised a hotel and club, resulted in a separate 1,580sq m (17,000sq ft) spa being introduced in 2003.

Hotel guests have complimentary access to the majority of the fitness offering, which includes a 3,720sq m (40,000sq ft) gym, four group exercise studios running 145 classes a week, two outdoor training zones, three pools, racquet sports, cycle studio, boxing studio and more than 30 personal trainers. This is why the club generates significant repeat business for the hotel, as Stevens confirms: "Particularly in these troubled economic times, we've noticed that guests are giving up frequent-stay points at the chains and negotiating a rate here instead, because they want the fitness lifestyle."

Yet it's the local membership of 6,000 that defines this club. Entry-

The Adler Spa & Resort in Italy (below) has classes including Nordic Walking, as well as private coaching





The Houstonian Club in Texas (above and right) charges entry level members £8,860 in joining fees alone

level members are 'Associates', paying US\$14,000 (£8,860) to join plus an average monthly fee of US\$189 (£120), while 'Residents' pay a US\$24,000 (£15,190) joining fee plus US\$318 (£201) monthly. Residents enjoy their own VIP fitness centre, wet and dry relaxation rooms, dedicated parking and luxury lockers, among other benefits. "We've positioned ourselves strongly among the community, associating ourselves with charitable and wellness-related activities," continues Stevens.

Offered to members and non-members, the club is also known for its speciality fitness programmes. Examples such as Resolution Shape Up, with its emphasis on weight management, are typically run over a 12-week period and help with retention and new business.

CLOSER TO HOME

Back in Europe, in the heart of the Dolomites in Italy, Adler Spa & Sport Resort has aimed to consolidate its holistic spa offering and widen its year-round appeal by marketing a specific fitness programme, first introduced in 2002. But although the resort's all-inclusive fee includes participation in classes and outdoor activities, including Nordic Walking, it is private coaching at an extra cost that has enjoyed a recent upsurge in demand.

"There's been a noticeable trend for people seeking PT and individual treatment," says director of marketing Karin Ploner. "We've developed special packages in response, which also promote the resort in quieter periods. This winter, we will offer a three-night Fitness Package comprising bio-



impedance body composition analysis, a private coaching session, and a training and nutrition plan to take home."

Although hotels don't require extensive resort facilities to be marketed as fitness-oriented locations, a well-equipped gym and group class timetable are minimum requirements. Formby Hall Golf Resort and Spa, located in Southport on England's 'Golf Coast', opened a 40-plus-station gym, Kinesis Studio and fitness studio for 40 weekly classes in 2008, as part of a new health club that's used by sports professionals, hotel guests and a local membership base. "We decided to open a five-star fitness facility as a result of our PGA accreditation and consumer demand," comments leisure & spa manager Tom Davies. "We have professionals training here and have aimed to become specialists in fitness, particularly golf fitness."

Davies says local residents were targeted from the outset and that the capacity figure of 800 for membership has already been met.

A free outdoor workshop highlighting BTS (Body Transformation System) instruction has been popular, while paying locals can attend group fitness classes if they are not full. Davies adds that the club, which derives some

income from membership, is proving to be a viable business, although it's the spa component that makes the most money. What's more important, though, is the added value these facilities bring. "People keep coming back to your resort because of the quality facilities and service they find," adds Davies. Hotel guests can use the club and attend classes for free, but the resort is also launching residential fitness packages this autumn, beginning with a yoga break.

At Barnham Broom in Norfolk, the experienced leisure manager Corey Knoop oversees a gym with over 100 pieces of equipment and group classes varying from circuit training to fitness yoga. His concluding observations provide some interesting food for thought: "Many hotels say they're a fitness destination, yet on arrival guests are disappointed to find a small, unmanned gym and swimming pool. Hotels promoting themselves as fitness destinations should instead consider the whole package – we have golf, squash, tennis, swimming, gym, fitness classes, local walks and a dedicated fitness staff. Our clients definitely go away feeling fitter and fresher after their visit."



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global snapshot

Kristen A Walsh reports on the findings of this year's IHRSA Global Report, which suggests that health clubs are adapting to the changing global marketplace

Last year proved to be a challenge to the global economy as a whole, but the fitness industry weathered economic woes with a solid performance in 2009: a near US\$70bn industry globally, with over 126,000 health clubs serving 119 million members, according to *The 2010 IHRSA Global Report*, which was released in June by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association.

In Europe, revenue reached US\$31bn and 42.5 million consumers belonged to health clubs. The Asia-Pacific region has remained steady with over US\$10bn generated in revenues and nearly 16 million members.

In North America, 53.1 million members used 38,000 facilities, with health club members using their facilities at record-breaking rates: in the US, for example, health club usage by core members in 2009 averaged an impressive 102 days a year.

"Increased usage is typically associated with increased spending in non dues-related items, such as personal training, lessons, juice bars and other services," says Jay Ablondi, IHRSA's executive vice president of global products. "In spite of the tough economy, consumers visited their clubs more often, not only to improve their health but also to relieve stress."

the americas

Long thought to set the pace for all markets, the US health club industry increased revenue by two per cent to US\$19.5bn (£12.34bn) in 2009. Health club numbers declined slightly to 29,750, while membership remained statistically the same with 45.3 million members. Of these, roughly 23 per cent were new members. In 2009, 7.2 million consumers used a health club as non-members.

The Canadian market held steady, generating US\$2.1bn (£1.3bn) in revenues with the patronage of an estimated 5.3 million members. GoodLife Fitness leads the market in Canada, with revenues of nearly US\$275m (£174m) generated in 2009 from over 250 clubs. World Health was also a key player in 2009, generating US\$51m (£32.2m) from more than 100,000 members.

Latin American markets posted solid performances in 2009. In Brazil, 4.7 million people attended 15,000 clubs, in a market worth US\$1.6bn (£1.0bn).

europa

Led by solid markets in the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, Europeans have placed a high value on fitness, evident by the 4 per cent increase in club memberships from 40.7 million in 2008 to 42.5 million in 2009.

In the UK, results from an annual survey conducted by The Leisure Database Company shows membership increased from 7.2 million in 2008 to 7.3 million in 2009. In addition, market size increased by US\$500,000 (£316,000) to US\$5.7m (£3.6m).

Budget and circuit-training chains have fuelled industry growth for the German market. Mrs Sporty finished the year with 338 clubs, while McFit served nearly a million members in over 100 locations. Overall, the German market generated US\$3.4bn (£2.15bn) in industry revenue through 5,900 clubs.

Fitness participation continues to have a strong presence in the Netherlands. In 2009, 2.4 million consumers belonged to 2,000 Dutch health clubs.

asia-pacific

Once regarded as an untapped market, the Asia-Pacific region is home to a number of successful club companies.

The Japanese market generated an estimated US\$3.4bn (£2.15bn) in 2009, with 5,000 health clubs. According to Club Business Japan, new club openings were slow in 2009 as club closings and consolidation dominated health club business transactions.

The emergence of new, flexible membership options in Japan may prove helpful in attracting a younger population, typically more price-sensitive than veteran members.

China's fitness market remains a leader in the Asia-Pacific region, with more than 3 million members frequenting 1,800 health clubs.

"CHINA'S FITNESS MARKET REMAINS A LEADER IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION, WITH THREE MILLION MEMBERS"

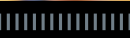


Jexer: 14th largest operator in Japan



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conclusion



The European market was led by solid performances from the UK, Germany and the Netherlands, resulting in a four per cent increase in memberships

beyond the numbers

According to industry expert Rick Caro, the economy affected fitness businesses in a variety of ways in 2009.

Caro, the president of Management Vision – a fitness industry consulting company based in New York City – explains: “Clubs found fewer new prospect leads and needed to find new marketing techniques. They also suffered from increasing attrition rates. In many cases, ancillary revenue levels decreased, or at least stopped growing at previous rates. Finally, the pressure on revenue triggered many clubs to attack all expense items and create meaningful cost savings.

“In many cases, the expense savings did not start early enough in the year, so EBITDA & EBITDAR levels decreased.”

He adds: “Despite this pressure on clubs, there were some elements of optimism, especially towards the end of 2009. Those adults who remained as members used their clubs more frequently. The debt markets were

still difficult to access, so fewer major transactions occurred in 2009 and fewer new builds occurred, so the balance of supply versus demand remained about the same.”

Most extremists do not see any major improvement in key factors – including employment levels – until late in 2010, notes Caro. “Most clubs are therefore turning inward to improve their organic growth,” he explains. “Attrition rates seem to have levelled off in early 2010 as membership levels have stabilised. Ancillary revenue seems to be creeping upward. Expense savings are starting to have a meaningful impact on the bottom line. Franchise companies are growing.

“A few of the larger clubs are acquiring or building, but at a slower pace compared to 2007 and early 2008; debt is still a challenge, both for cashflow-based and asset-based lending. Many private equity firms are still standing on the sidelines waiting to enter the club industry and few are likely to exit in 2010.”

As with nearly every industry, fitness has been affected by the global economic recession. However, it has shown itself to be remarkably resilient. Club owners have re-examined their operations from top to bottom. They have implemented tighter expense management and have found new and innovative ways to attract and retain members. Savvy operators have also taken advantage of softer real estate markets and lower construction costs to fund expansions and renovations.

Led by successful club companies and a public in need of the stress-relieving benefits of exercise, global industry revenues were solid in 2009, with increases in the number of memberships and health club facilities. With strong leadership and a firm understanding of consumer needs, global markets should anticipate further growth in 2010.

“The future is promising because our industry is one full of entrepreneurs – individuals who are adept at identifying and filling needs,” says IHRSA president and CEO Joe Moore. “They meet all challenges, overcome all obstacles and succeed despite all barriers.”

“A FEW OF THE LARGER CLUBS ARE ACQUIRING OR BUILDING, BUT AT A SLOWER PACE COMPARED TO 2007”



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green is golden

According to IHRSA's Go Green survey, clubs appreciate the importance of sustainability – but how committed is the industry to cutting its emissions? Kath Hudson reports

“**G**oing green can have a positive impact on a club's image, establish them as leaders in their communities, positively impact recruitment and retention of members and employees, and improve the bottom line,” says Bruce Buckbee, managing partner of Leisure Green, which worked with IHRSA on the Go Green survey, polling 143 clubs on their eco attitudes.

The results of the survey indicate that most clubs agree with Buckbee's comments: many of them believe being seen as a green business can help membership sales, boost retention and drive profits. Despite this, however, many clubs say their efforts in this area are held back by a lack of time, money or expertise, or because they get caught up with other priorities.

theory vs practice

In the research, more than two-thirds – 70.7 per cent – indicated that senior management has a strongly positive

perspective on implementing green practices. Almost half – 48.9 per cent – thought green practices would increase club profits, while 35 per cent thought they would increase membership growth and 38.8 per cent felt they would increase membership retention.

However, just 29.3 per cent of clubs have implemented a formal strategic eco-plan; almost 60 per cent of clubs have no plan, although they have adopted some green practices.

Recycling, green cleaning supplies and water conservation are the most common areas where clubs are making progress. Many were also making moves towards energy efficiency and green building/renovations.

Some of the more innovative green practices in use include water and energy conservation: low-flow showerheads, waterless urinals, better insulation and windows, timers on lights, turning off lights when rooms are not in use, and full spectrum lighting. Green meetings to encourage staff to adopt

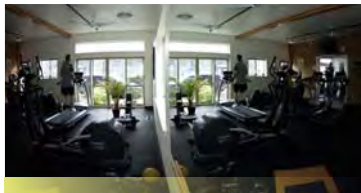
eco-friendly practices, encouraging members to turn off the TV, lights and even cardio equipment when not in use, buying green equipment and going for LEED Certified Club designation – an internationally recognised certification system which provides a framework for green design – were also advocated.

Meanwhile, the areas in which clubs felt they were not doing so well related to the purchase of carbon offsets, buying green power, using alternative energy and measuring emissions.

The number one barrier to expanding clubs' green practices, according to respondents, was having other higher priorities – 64.5 per cent of clubs said this was the case. Insufficient time or resources was the reason given by 45.5 per cent, while 27.3 per cent said there wasn't enough green expertise in their particular organisation.

alternative energy

However, some clubs have not only put the green issue at the top of the agenda but are using it as their main selling point. Last year, the Green Microgym in Portland, Oregon, US, generated 36 per cent of its energy itself, through a mix of solar panels and human energy – energy



Green Microgym in Portland, US, generates 36 per cent of its own energy, including through its machines





**Titanic Spa & Club in
Huddersfield invested £1.5m
in a carbon neutral building**

recaptured from the gym equipment. The club estimates it saved 37,000kw hours last year, which is the equivalent of planting 15 acres of trees.

The ellipticals, studio bikes and treadmills have all been retrofitted with technology which means the energy members expend while exercising can be used to help power the building. Members can earn loyalty points to spend in the club while doing this.

Other measures include not selling bottled water but rather encouraging members to refill steel water bottles, purchasing refurbished equipment and using LCD televisions, which use less energy than plasma screens. Eco-friendly construction materials have also been used, including Marmoleum flooring, a type of recycled rubber.

Club manager Adam Boesel says the assumption that it costs more to be green is unfounded: "We spend less on a lot of things, including equipment, than other gyms. We also save about 85 per cent per square foot on our electricity bill through our energy-saving culture."

cutting carbon emissions

In the UK, a number of clubs are also taking the issue seriously. GLL, London's largest operator of public leisure facilities, is responsible for 40,000 tonnes of carbon each year, so in 2007 the challenge was set to cut this

down by 2 per cent year-on-year. "Climate change, potential water shortages and volatile energy costs mean the importance of increasing sustainability through controlling consumption and reducing waste is paramount," explains GLL's energy and environment manager, Jeremy Gould.

The company completed The Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme, producing an energy and environment policy and strategy with the aim of reducing gas and electricity consumption. Each centre now has its own baseline carbon footprint and annual consumption budget as a starting point for measuring improvements.

As well as reducing carbon emissions, targets were set in areas such as staff training on environmental issues, recycling systems, going after accreditations, and the green credentials of builds and refurbishments. There's been ongoing investment in energy-saving measures, including 15 automatic pool covers, high frequency lighting and automatic metering. This gives managers an instant picture of the energy used the previous day, week or month, and immediately flags up

problems such as water leaks. A pilot installation of solar panels is now being monitored to see if they can be rolled out across other leisure centres.

The results at GLL have been encouraging so far: gas and electricity consumption fell by 10 per cent in 2007, with savings in the region of £300,000. During 2009, carbon emissions were cut by around 7 per cent.

SLM is another public leisure facility operator that signed up to The Carbon Trust Standard as a commitment to becoming greener. To gain the accreditation, SLM had to prove a reduction of carbon emissions over three consecutive years and provide qualitative evidence of robust policies and procedures.

"The Carbon Trust Standard process cost £12,000 and I would estimate that, over the past three years, SLM has spent around £150,000 on energy-saving measures. Savings are difficult to quantify, as utility contracts and costs change, but the consumption has reduced by around 6 per cent from 2007 to 2010," says group technical manager Stephen Elliott.

sustainable building

Chadderton Wellbeing Centre, a new £9m leisure centre run by Oldham Community Leisure, has won two awards for sustainability and is now up

► for another national award. Sustainable features include a rainwater harvesting system, solar shading, increased thermal insulation and a Green2Go combined heat and power (CHP) generating system. This is powered by bio-fuel waste cooking oil from commercial and public sector buildings in the area, and provides all the heat and power requirements; any surplus is exported to the National Grid. The boiler was supplied and is maintained by Green2Go, which sells the green energy to the council at an hourly rate.

General manager of Community 1st Oldham, Neil Charlesworth, says: "Collectively, these features have resulted in an A-rated energy performance certificate. This is one of the highest ratings available and demonstrates the impact of the ground-breaking technologies that exist in the building, which are resulting in an estimated cost-effective reduction in the building's carbon emissions of around 450,000kg a year."

Meanwhile, Titanic Spa & Club in Huddersfield invested £1.5m in the creation of a carbon neutral building. It's powered by solar panels and a CHP, which uses chippings from a sustainable source, and also has its own bore-hole. The swimming pool is salt-regulated (an alternative to chlorine), while an energy-efficient oxonated water laundry system – which uses ozone in the disinfectant so the wash can be done with cool water – is provided by Otex Laundry Systems.

"As a spa and leisure facility, we felt it was important our building was healthy for the planet and future generations,

Chadderton Wellbeing Centre in Oldham has won two awards for sustainability and is up for a third

as well as our current customers," says club manager Matthew Barker. "It took greater initial investment to achieve this, but we knew that, by lowering energy consumption, this would result in lower running costs in the long term, as well as a carbon neutral building."

Like other operators who have prioritised green practices, Barker believes it gives them a competitive edge: "While we didn't set out to use it as a marketing angle, it has in fact been one of our greatest marketing assets. Our customers feel good about being associated with an ethical business."

going green

For businesses spending more than £50,000 a year on energy, The Carbon Trust will send a consultant to do a survey and work on an action plan. For firms spending less than this, there's an online tool kit on energy management.

The Carbon Trust has interest-free loans available for green equipment, with the repayments made through energy savings, so the loan is effectively free. The Trust will also offer building design advice and free or subsidised consultancy throughout a project.

And there are plenty of ways to become greener without having to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds. For example, social media and email marketing can replace flyers.

Boesel recommends buying a Kill-a-Watt energy meter to understand how much equipment costs when



it's on and off and then make simple changes. And simply putting the issue at the top of the priority list for your business – or assembling a green team to brainstorm ideas, for example – can also make a big difference.

Since this is an issue we're all aware we need to embrace, it can only generate goodwill from members if they see their clubs making the effort.



SLM achieved Carbon Trust Standard accreditation

useful contacts

Contact The Carbon Trust for an energy audit and advice on any aspect of becoming green: 0800 085 2005

Green2Go is encouraging and implementing low carbon alternative fuel options: www.green2go.org.uk

For a list of organisations offering advice on going green, please refer to pages 120–125 of the *HCM 2010 Handbook*.



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show preview

professional beauty manchester

Discover the secrets of success with a visit to the UK's largest beauty show outside of London

Home to all that's fresh, new and inspirational, Professional Beauty Manchester – which takes place on 10–11 October 2010 – will again be welcoming beauty and wellness owners, managers, therapists and technicians to the Manchester Central exhibition hall. With new products making their debut, global brands and bestsellers being showcased, plus competitions and special offers galore, the show will get professionals up to speed on everything that's going on in the sector. There are also educational opportunities, from Professional Beauty Magazine Live to Club Class Beauty and the FHT (Federation of Holistic Therapists) conference.

no.1 for education

The *Professional Beauty* magazine editor, Jenni Middleton, has compiled a cutting-edge masterclass programme focused around a central theme of 'doing your business proud'. Hosted by renowned experts, the programme offers advice and expertise on how businesses can succeed in today's challenging economic climate, including sessions on how to ensure your salon makes a profit, setting the standards of excellence and how to market in the style of the big companies. The programme can be viewed at www.professionalbeautymanchester.com

New to Professional Beauty Manchester is Club Class Beauty. Taking place on Monday 11 October, this networking and learning event will offer attendees the chance to hear industry gurus Daniel Sandler, Andy Rouillard, Jaclyn Hughes and Jarrod Abbott-Davids share their secrets, demonstrate their skills and answer questions. Spaces are limited, so find out more at www.professionalbeautymanchester.com/club

Another unmissable forum for learning is Dermatology for the Skincare Specialist, a one-day conference from the FHT that takes place on Sunday



The Professional Beauty Manchester show will run from 10–11 October

10 October. With so many clients suffering from sensitive or problem skin, therapists frequently debate what's best for them. This day session will explore how therapists can assist in the improvement of treatable conditions while recognising the issues surrounding high-risk treatments. Further information can be found at www.professionalbeautymanchester.com/fht

alive with opportunity

A visit to Professional Beauty Manchester also offers the opportunity to meet and do business with representatives from global brands, as well as discovering the latest product launches. Suppliers are keen for visitors to be the first to try and buy their products and will be offering special discounts and show-only offers. Visitors

who pre-register for the event will be sent a handy pocket-sized booklet containing details of all these offers, travel information, competitions and much more. To find out more about the event, or to register for free entry, visit www.professionalbeautymanchester.com/healthclub

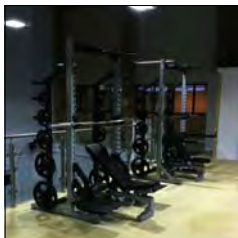
ABOUT PROFESSIONAL BEAUTY MANCHESTER

Venue: Manchester Central
Opening times:

Sunday 10 October 10.00am–5.30pm
Monday 11 October 10.00am–5.00pm

Ticket information:

Register for free entry at www.professionalbeautymanchester.com/healthclub



York Fitness powers Sherborne School

Sherborne School in Dorset has recently completed a new mezzanine installation and gym refurb to house its new York Performance Centre.

Paul Miles, head of sport at the school, selected York as he had trained on the manufacturer's STS equipment himself and was impressed with its simple design, durability and versatility.

The gym mezzanine now offers three Olympic lifting platforms, York STS Half Rack modular training stations and attachments, several York adjustable dumbbell benches, and Olympic plates and top of the range bars. "The gym has been designed to improve athletic performance in the pupils at Sherborne, but also to cater for the local community, to help improve general wellbeing," says Miles. "We looked at the rich history of York and this tied in nicely with the history we have here at Sherborne – it's a perfect match."

fitness-kit.net keywords
york fitness

For more information, or to contact any of these companies, log on to www.fitness-kit.net and type the company name under 'keyword search'

New manufacturing unit for Ridgeway

Ridgeway Furniture, the manufacturer of changing room and hotel bedroom furniture, has recently launched a bespoke manufacturing unit, allowing it to offer even better value for money. MD Mark Cutler says: "We've always been known for our great quality but, by investing in our own fantastic manufacturing unit, we can now achieve great savings and better lead times."

Following on from these improvements, Ridgeway has secured contracts with DLL in Dublin,

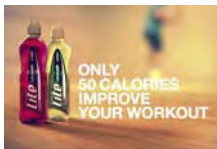


fitness-kit.net keyword
ridgeway

Cannons Health Club at Stoke Poges, Hinckley Island Hotel, Spire Hospital in Harpenden, Springhealth Health Club in Heathrow and Nirvana Spa in Reading.

Advice for a profitable business from GSK

Making the sports nutrition category accessible and relevant is key to driving sales. Four key ways to maximise your sales are:



fitness-kit.net keyword
GSK

1. Tapping into consumers with an unrecognised need to purchase, to drive incremental sales.
2. Ensuring products are visible and easily accessible in both your outlet and the market.
3. Educating members on how the products can help them achieve their performance goals.
4. Using isotonic sports drinks, a much heavier penetrated category than sports nutrition, as a springboard to cross-sell other non-energy products, such as recovery or strength.



Zynk Design appointed by The Gym Group

Zynk Design has been appointed by The Gym Group as the lead design agency in the roll-out of The Gym brand across the UK.

"Zynk's knowledge of the sector is all-encompassing. The team at Zynk brings innovative design and space planning skills to each new

project they're faced with. Most importantly they bring solutions, not problems, when addressing design issues – a refreshing exception in my experience," says John Treharne CEO of The Gym Group.

fitness-kit.net keyword
zynk



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The Sport Market Forecasts are produced in conjunction with Sport England.

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Virtual Active by Matrix allows users to escape to a new destination with fully interactive video programming. Available on all 7xe series cardio products. For more information visit www.matrixfitness.co.uk



Official UK
launch at LIW

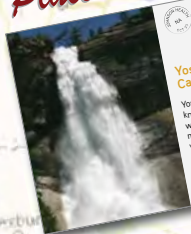
Visit stand H103

See us at:



LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
21-23 September 2010
NEC Birmingham, UK

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Yosemite National Park, known for its waterfalls within its nearly 1,200 miles, you can find deep valleys, grand meadows, ancient giant sequoias, a vast wilderness of



Crater Lake, Oregon

No place else on earth combines a deep, pure lake, so blue in color, sheer surrounding cliffs, almost two thousand feet high, two picturesque islands, and a violent volcanic past. Crater Lake is a place of immeasurable beauty.



Bryce Canyon, Utah

Millions of years of wind, water and geologic mayhem have shaped and etched the pink cliffs at Bryce, which isn't actually a canyon but the eastern slope of the Paupauguant Plateau.

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LIW Show Preview



LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
21-23 Sept 2010 · NEC Birmingham UK

LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK 2010

Leisure Industry Week 2010

Venue: NEC, Birmingham
Dates: 21-23 September 2010
Opening times: Tues 21 September, 10am–5pm
Weds 22 September, 10am–5pm
Thurs 23 September, 10am–4pm
Contact: Pre-register for the show at www.liw.co.uk

We look forward to the highlights of this year's show, which takes place in Birmingham this month

This year's Leisure Industry Week (LIW) is set to be another exciting and visually stimulating show incorporating the newest products for the out-of-home leisure industry. In 2009, the show celebrated its 21st year and attracted more than 12,500

visitors; with a host of new features, informative seminars and networking opportunities, there's set to be something for everyone again this year.

Taking place at the NEC Birmingham from 21–23 September 2010, the show will be split into seven areas: Sport,

Health & Fitness, Pool & Spa, Leisure Facilities, Play & Attractions, Eat & Drink, and Licensed Business.

"We have an array of new features, seminars and networking opportunities at this year's Leisure Industry Week. We invite everyone in the industry to come and see the latest innovations on offer and to take the opportunity to make new contacts and do business," says Jonny Sullens, portfolio director at LIW.

2010 LAUNCHES

New products and services set to be showcased at this year's show include:

The Pro6 from Power Plate International, a new platform that seamlessly integrates patented cable resistance technology to unite two proven exercise methods – cable

resistance and vibration training – for the first time. Power Plate classes will take place throughout the show.

milan is launching its new Premium series to the UK market at LIW. With a modern design and dark carbon satin finish, the machines also offer improved biomechanics, as well as an enhanced control panel and software.

Pulse is celebrating its 30th anniversary by launching a new cardio range, including the latest in audiovisual advances. Visit stand H100 to find out more.

Cybox will launch the Cytrek Treadmill, which features a new interface and a range of custom console and deck combinations. The new CARDIOtouch touchscreen console puts all controls in a central location and is also designed so

users can grab it to stabilise themselves while in motion. Visit stand H55 to see the Cytrek Treadmill for yourself.

Matrix Fitness Systems will showcase the new S-Series LS indoor cycle. The new model includes a variety of high



The new X-Force range will be unveiled

performance features that have been inspired by the drive and determination of Lance Armstrong.

With cycling becoming increasingly popular across the country, visitors to LIW can expect to see other new exercise and studio bikes being launched to the market. Precor will unveil its 815s upright and recumbent bikes, with a new extra-comfortable seat and unique ventilation design. ZigZag will launch the interactive Espresso S3y upright youth bike, with a smaller design making it suitable for children aged nine to 15 years. And Trixter will introduce the XBi bike – the result of a partnership with Sony – and the latest version of its Xdream bike, the Xdream mark 3, with a ghost racing mode that allows users to race against themselves. (see also *HCM* Aug 10, p40).

ZigZag has also teamed up with *Britain's Got Talent* stars Strike – Liam Richards and Danny Ball – to launch a fun-based martial arts programme for children and young adults that combines martial arts, dance and gymnastics, all choreographed to music. Strike will be demonstrating the innovative martial arts routine at LIW.

X-Force, the Swedish equipment manufacturer, will unveil its brand new strength range to the UK at LIW. The unique range, which uses a patented tilted weight stack, gives users the benefits of negative training in a simple, safe and productive manner. X-Force will be showcasing eight of the 14 models from the range at LIW. Inventor Mats Tulin will be available for questions on stand HF4.

Premier Training International will launch its new Power Club CPD qualification at the show. Shaped



Premier Training will debut its latest CPD qualification – a Power Clubs training course

like a baseball bat, Power Clubs come in various weights – the weight is unevenly loaded to one end, with the handle at the other – and can be used in a range of exercises. Targeted at both male and female users, they enable dynamic movement and momentum to be incorporated into resistance training (see photograph above).

Life Fitness will be showing several new equipment ranges at LIW 2010, including the new Optima Series Dual-Exercise Strength Machines. Ideal for smaller, budget conscious facilities, they are highly functional, stylish, durable and easy to use. The machines complete the Optima Series strength training line, which comprises single

and dual station exercise machines, as well as benches and racks.

Gladstone will unveil the latest enhancements to its Plus2 and Connect member management software systems. Meanwhile, new developments in its Kiosk package include a virtual 'shopping basket' for booking classes or buying products online, as well as the option to link with friends and family to book classes on their behalf.

Keiser will be celebrating the launch of its new Keiser Performance Training Centre at LIW. It will also be showcasing its M5 Elliptical at LIW and offering instructors, owners and operators the opportunity to take part in an M5 Elliptical or M3 Indoor Cycling demonstration class.

Lifetime will be offering a new and unique online Leadership and Management programme for individuals wishing to move into a management role within a leisure centre or health club environment. Developed by industry specialists, staff already in a duty or fitness manager capacity can complete the course entirely online to enhance their skills and understanding.

Xn Leisure Systems has been offering leisure management solutions for over 28 years and serves more than 5,000 users in the leisure industry. This year, Xn Leisure Systems will be exhibiting its new self-service and online products.



Britain's Got Talent stars Strike have teamed up with ZigZag to offer martial arts for kids

SHOW HIGHLIGHTS HEALTH & FITNESS

PTontheNET Functional Training Zone

The PTontheNET Functional Training Zone will exhibit products that can transform small and unused areas on the gym floor into profitable areas. Personal trainers will also be able to experience the latest training programmes and products related to effective functional training.

Exhibitors showcasing in this area include Leisure Lines, Jordan Fitness, Escape Fitness, Keiser, FitPro, Fight Fit, Thump Boxing, Padbox, Premier Training and Nordic Walking.

Independent Operators Unite

Independent operators will be able to attend the IOU (Independent Operators Unite) programme of seminars for free.

On 22 September, IOU will present 'The Independent Operators' Guide to Fantastic Retention Results', while a further seminar will look at increasing secondary spend within fitness facilities.

The closing session will debate the struggles of being an independent operator, with operators around the country sharing their experience and lessons learnt from running their clubs.

On the evening of the 22 September, up to 1,000 independent operators will enjoy the IOU Party 2010 at the Mechu bar in Birmingham.

FIA Education Programme

The FIA has developed a programme of informative speakers from the health and fitness industry – industry leaders who will debate the best ways for the industry to succeed in the future.

Seminars on 21 September will look at 'Future-proofing the Health and Fitness Industry' while the keynote, aimed at senior management, will discuss the 2010 Commission.



There will be a series of workshops dedicated to middle management. GMTV's resident life coach, Pete Cohen, has been invited to LIW on Wednesday 22 September to talk about making a difference with positive psychology. He will be joined by Georgina Jupp from the CK Academy, who will discuss 'Enlightened Customer Care – The Emotional Connection', and by Keith Burnett of Hilton Hotels who will talk about achieving membership sales from the disengaged. Meanwhile Sue Anstiss, managing director of Promote PR, will give a session on social media and how it can benefit businesses in the leisure sector on Wednesday 22 September.

Register of Exercise Professionals (REPS) National Convention

The REPs National Convention will be held at LIW on Thursday 23 September, with keynote presentations from Dr Cath Sanderson (Leeds Met University) and Jamie Edwards (Trained Brain), plus a choice of 10 workshops. These workshops will cover a variety of topics – including postural analysis, behaviour

change, Nordic Walking, the ViPR training tool and community activation – and will be delivered by FitPro, Premier Training International, Lifetime Health & Fitness, Later Life Training, Yfit, Northern Fitness, the FIA, Nordic Walking and CK Academy.

sporta

sporta, the representative body for leisure and cultural trusts in the UK, will be attending LIW for the fifth year running. The organisation, which represents more than 100 trusts operating in excess of 5,000 facilities, will be holding its General Meeting on 22 September and is expecting around 100 members to attend.

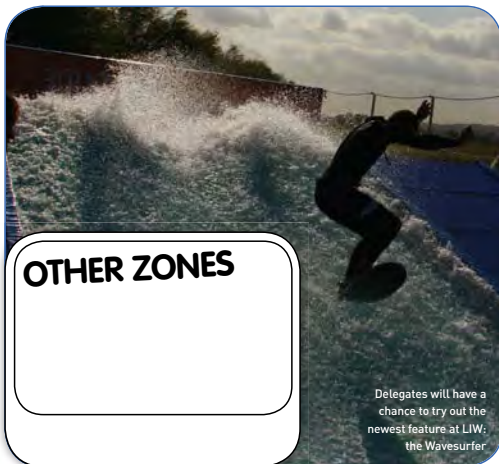
CLOA

The Chief Cultural & Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) will be inviting its strategic partners to a meeting at LIW.

The meeting will focus on the new government's plans for cuts, how the coalition will look to increase participation, and the possible impact of the 'right to request' – the option for public sector workers to request to leave their employers and set up their own, independent social enterprises to deliver



More than 12,500 visitors attended Leisure Industry Week at the NEC last year



OTHER ZONES

Delegates will have a chance to try out the newest feature at LIW: the Wavesurfer

services to the community – on local government culture and sport workers.

CLOA expects figures from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), as well as the Local Government Association (LGA)/ Local Governance Innovation & Development (LGID), Audit Commission and non-departmental public bodies to attend.

FitPro PT Fusion Tour

The FitPro Fusion Tour is a two-hour workshop designed to bring business and client scenarios to life. Leading fitness presenters will discuss and demonstrate: ViPR, the functional training tool; online educational resource PTOnTheNet; and FASTER Health and Fitness, which focuses on delivering high-quality training for personal trainers.

Speakers include Robert Cappuccino, who has designed and implemented sales, customer relations, management and personal training systems for a number of leading industry organisations; John Hardy, founder of FASTER Health and Fitness; and Gavin Attore, a personal trainer specialising in Chain Reaction Biomechanics and Functional Strength Training for Human Movement.

EnviroZone

The Leisure Facilities area will host the new EnviroZone, which will give leisure venues a free insight into how they might reduce their carbon footprint, address huge utility bills and encourage visitors to be more 'green'.

Exhibitors will include Pulse Commercial Utilities, which will exhibit its smart meters; Vanguards Power, which designs and manufactures Advanced Energy Saving Systems; and MHA Lighting, which will exhibit its new LED technology. Meanwhile Riva Global, which specialises in reducing water and energy consumption for both public

and private sector organisations, will demonstrate how to make significant reductions in carbon footprints, while Calorex will exhibit the Calorex Pro-Pac commercial hot water heat pump. They will also be joined by Thermapool, which will exhibit its solar panel technology. Calorex and Thermapool will both be exhibiting in the Pool & Spa area.

Wavesurfer

Visitors to LIW this year will experience the newest addition to the show. Located in the Pool & Spa sector and showcased for the first time in the UK at LIW, the Wavesurfer is the ultimate aquatic attraction for body boarders, surfers, wake boarders and even skate and snowboarders. It provides a soft riding surface, allowing users to fall without hurting themselves, making it ideal to learn and practise new tricks and moves for people of all ages and abilities.

The Wavesurfer team of professional surfers will present live demonstrations of this innovative new feature within the Pool & Spa area at LIW. Visitors can also experience the Wavesurfer first-hand, with the chance to get into a wetsuit and have a go for themselves.



Calorex is to launch its new Calorex Pro-Pac commercial hot water heat pump

EXHIBITOR & DELEGATE PERSPECTIVE

Jon Johnston, MD of Matrix, says: "2010 will be the third consecutive year that Matrix has exhibited at LIW. The show enables Matrix to gain good company, brand and product awareness in the industry, particularly as we are really beginning to establish ourselves in the UK as a key fitness equipment supplier. In the past two to three years, Matrix has really developed and enhanced its products and services, and LIW has provided us with the platform to promote this and show our new innovations to the marketplace."

Nick Eagle, fitness manager at The Park Club in Abingdon, says: "LIW provided us with the opportunity to see and try out Matrix equipment, and to make a comparison with other suppliers. Several of the instructors at The Park Club visited LIW to try out the kit and we signed an order for Matrix's 7xe CV and G7 strength ranges during the show."

Jeff Davies, director of commercial sales at Power Plate, says: "We've been exhibiting at LIW for the past few years,



PowerPlate will launch its new Pro6 and will run exhibition classes through the show

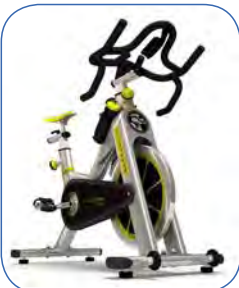
building successful relationships with other exhibitors and operators alike. LIW offers us the chance to network with existing contacts, showcase new products and technology, as well as creating networking opportunities."

In 2009, Power Plate pre-sold everything that was on the LIW stand, making it one of its most successful shows to date. Independent operator Dan Hillier of Body Sound Health and Fitness in Chandler's Ford, Hampshire, says: "I purchased three Power Plate pro5 AllRadaptive machines at LIW last year to include on my gym floor. The machines offer clients a new and unique way of incorporating vibration training into their existing fitness regime and have been a real hit with my clients."

John Halls, sales and marketing director at The Physical Company, says:

"We see LIW as the main show of the year for us – an opportunity for us to get in front of the industry's key figures. It's also a great opportunity for us to meet up with existing customers and clients. When it comes to new product releases or launching a new catalogue, LIW is about as relevant to us as you can get."

Sales from The Physical Company stand were up by 9 per cent in 2009 from the previous year. Craig Krupinski, business development manager at DW Sports Fitness, says: "Following LIW 2009, we formed a new relationship with The Physical Company. It's now our preferred supplier for portable fitness equipment and works closely with us when providing equipment. We visit LIW every year, as it gives us the opportunity to visit all relevant suppliers and helps us to make an informed decision".



Matrix will exhibit at Leisure Industry Week for the third consecutive year



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self service, as easy as

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We explain the benefits of online bookings and how they can help your customers and staff

Budget cuts, planning for better cost control and demand for increased revenue brings added pressure to most leisure centres – especially in the public sector, which is very much in the media spotlight.

As a leading supplier to the public sector for almost three decades, Xn Leisure recognises that the leisure industry is typically several years behind the retail sector in terms of technology deployment and customer service innovation. This trend isn't a bad thing as it allows for new technologies and ways of working to be pioneered within the heavy use arena of retail, where the wrinkles are ironed out. Leisure can then adopt the latest innovation with minimal risk, taking advantage of the retail trials and learning from their experience. The downside is the customer perception of leisure facilities: the sense that they're not investing in technology to enhance the customer experience.

In the latest trend of 'living in the cloud', with a shift towards online shopping – even Amazon is jumping on the bandwagon of grocery deliveries – Xn Leisure is leading the way. Xn Leisure has already seen chip and pin installations go through the roof in a very short period of time, and recognised some time ago the need to bring new self-service elements to the market for 2010, when the market would be more receptive. It has therefore launched a new self-service journey, from online to self-service kiosks.



Xn leisure's solutions empowers members to book and purchase at a time convenient to them

Having spent time understanding what works and what doesn't work in various self-service applications across retail, travel and entertainment deployments, Xn Leisure is set to launch its new solutions at LIW. In an age where time is at a premium, the market is now ready to embrace these self-service technologies, which should be viewed

as an extension to the customer service offering, helping to reduce transaction times and speed up queue processing.

Xn already has multiple sites investing in several kiosks, linked through to online functionality, to allow members to book online, check themselves in and even renew their memberships.

Virtually overnight, partly fuelled by market pressure and influenced by the need to save money, self-service elements in leisure facilities and online functionality are being viewed as the next progressive step for our industry and are already being relied upon by early adopters as demand increases.

"SELF-SERVICE ELEMENTS AND ONLINE FUNCTIONALITY ARE VIEWED AS THE NEXT PROGRESSIVE STEP FOR THE SECTOR"

1 online bookings

Whether at home, at work or via access points in the community, your sessions, courses and activities can be booked online, any time of the day and night – or whenever you allow.

Real-time online booking is designed to complement existing services and offers an alternative to telephone booking. This provides for greater social inclusion for those who ordinarily cannot book over the phone due to disabilities such as impaired hearing. Online booking also provides an information service and alleviates pressure from your front desk, allowing your front of house to be truly service orientated.

The online solution is already integrated with major payment partners for ease and speed of deployment, and for easy configuration to your financial systems, for a total solution.



self-service is a journey

In a convenience age, with time at a premium, self-service is now widely accepted – an everyday occurrence.

People are increasingly familiar with web and self-serve technologies and the benefits it brings. A self-service journey will take the form of booking online, direct access to facilities (no queues) and automatically re-booking, leading to improved customer satisfaction.

Kiosks have become 'virtual receptionists' and a properly conceived deployment can better leverage your existing resources, control costs, and increase profitability and efficiency.



2 kiosks

Kiosks play an important role for customers, from their arrival – to check-in for a course – right through to re-booking a session for the following week, or self-service purchasing of activities. Xn's self-serve applications are deployed on robust, tried and tested technology with optional payment solutions.

Focusing on simplicity and ease of use, speed of transaction is paramount to a successful deployment and an enhanced customer experience. Customer feedback functions complete the solution for a fully-rounded product set.

online membership

Extend your sales team with the addition of online memberships.

Visitors to your website will be able to join online, easing the burden on your front of house operations. Once joined online, your new members will validate their membership on-site before using the facilities.

To extend the functionality of online memberships, your members will also be able to renew their memberships themselves, aiding your cashflow and allowing members to renew at their convenience – at a time which best suits their lifestyle.

3 access control

Automated access control is key to operating efficiencies. From a single point of entry

to more complex access-controlled solutions, including remote door, health suite or changing rooms controlled by gender, Xn provides a secure monitoring system for fast-track usage.

Integrated software logs access attempts for members/customers entering, allowing multiple swipes to be viewed simultaneously, with declined access flagged up for ease of identification. Prompts alert reception staff to any pertinent messages and account warnings. Latest technology allows for 'plug and play' hardware, based on network points supporting mag-swipe, barcode and proximity, subject to hardware installation.



EXHIBITOR NEWS 2010

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www.altro.com

Altro is a world leading manufacturer and supplier of flooring, walling, ceilings and doors kits. The company supplies hygienic, safe and practical solutions for all interior environments – without compromising on function or design. A vast product range features traditional and contemporary, textured and smooth coverings, all in a wide palette of colours. Altro's customers operate in the education, healthcare, pharmaceutical, retail, sports, leisure, hospitality and food and drink sectors. Altro is leading the way in sustainable manufacturing and is the first safety flooring manufacturer with the facility to recycle safety flooring in house, making it more sustainable.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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We're the world's leading manufacturer of infra red combat equipment and urban inflatables. Our groundbreaking S*A*T*R system gives real time hit feedback with no additional hardware, letting you set up a business which has a high income

profit yield which is totally scalable in either casual or organised groups, with 100s of players at once. Battlefield Sports' Infra-red gaming guns can be used safely both indoors and outdoors.

Section:

Play & Attractions

Battlefield Sports makes infra red combat equipment and urban inflatables



Clarity is launching its new leisure management system at LIW 2010

CLARITY

Tel: +44 (0)1732 525870

www.claritycommerce.com

Clarity's software helps leisure, hospitality, retail and entertainment companies to win and retain customers.

ClarityLive is the exciting new LMS being unveiled at LIW. It improves customers' interactions and experiences by helping staff to process and track transactions more efficiently. This solves problems such as long queues, slow customer service, lack of reliable information and poor co-ordination of sales channels.

Clarity brings fresh thinking to leisure management challenges. The company applies its expertise in leisure, as well as other sectors, giving businesses the tools they need to gather and interpret customer information, reduce costs, increase business control and boost profits.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**



30 YEARS OF INNOVATION... REVEALED

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BE INSPIRED – VISIT STAND H100



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Exhibitor News

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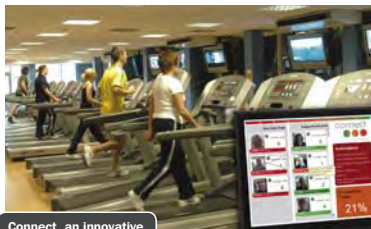


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Connect, an innovative membership retention tool, will be on display on stand F29 at LIW

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www.makingretentionsimple.co.uk

Connect is a simple to use, innovative membership retention tool. As an experienced leisure operator, Aquaterra Leisure has identified the barriers affecting consistent gym use through feedback from managers and fitness teams. This has been incorporated into an IT solution which is achieving positive results in transforming service delivery on the gym floor.

Find out more about the Connect membership retention tool at www.makingretentionsimple.co.uk or visit stand F29 at LIW.

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CREATIVE FITNESS MARKETING

Tel: +44 (0)870 270 6667

www.creativefitness.net

Creative Fitness Marketing is once again heading up the educational sessions and party for IOU at LIW in September.

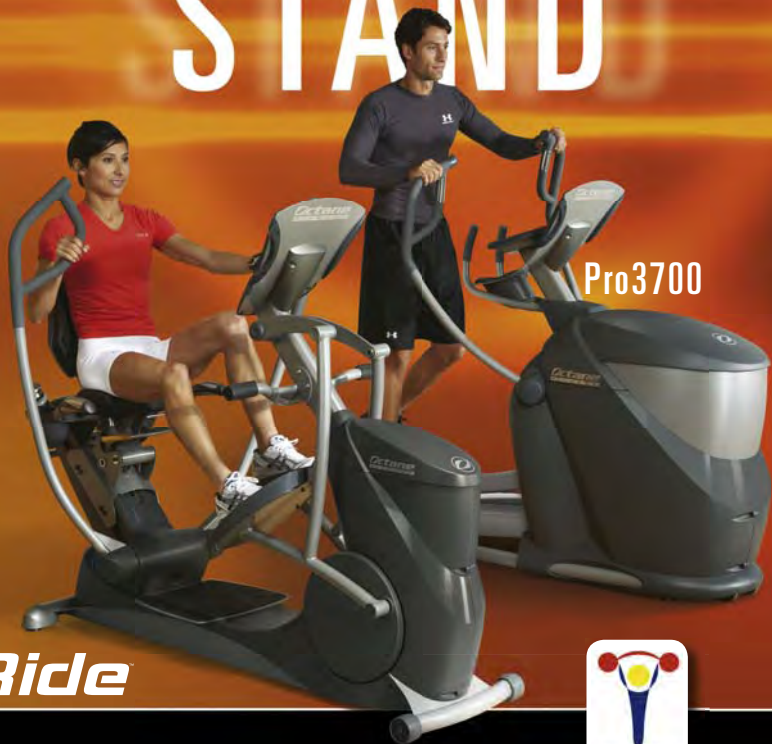
"After the most successful gathering of Independent Operators ever assembled in 2009, LIW 2010 is going to be bigger and even better for independent club owners, with over 800 people expected to enjoy the sessions, networking and the party" says Dave Wright, President and CEO of Creative Fitness Marketing.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

Creative Fitness Marketing will be partying at LIW



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WWW.OCTANEFITNESS.COM

Neil Campbell 07799 475366 Stand H240 at LIW.

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Exhibitor News



The VibroGym has been scientifically proven to

- Increase strength & power
- Increase core stability
- Increase flexibility
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- Decrease DOMS
- Help repair ACL injury
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Join the VibroGym UK Facebook group

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"I use vibration training before and after training because it allows me to **train harder and recover faster**. There has been a lot of international research done on vibration training showing that it **greatly reduces Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness** and that it can give me improved flexibility and jumping power in **much less time** than conventional training."

Tatiana Grigorieva, Olympic Pole Vault Silver Medalist

www.vgymuk.com
Dan Fivety 07709169997



Cybercoach makes dance mats available to wheelchair users

CYBER COACH

Tel: +44 (0)845 869 2848

www.cyber-coach.co.uk

Cyber Coach launches a new dance mat at LIW, specifically designed for special needs players. Designed to rest on the lap of a wheelchair user, the intelligent buttons respond to the presence of a hand or foot and the speed of movement and adjust the game appropriately.

MD of Cyber coach, Glen Jones commented: "While keeping the focus on fun, we believe the right way forward for kids fitness equipment is to include everyone."

Section: **Health & Fitness**



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Tel: +44 (0)1423 798630

www.dalesauna.co.uk

Dalesauna has been supplying the leisure industry for over 30 years and during that time the product range has grown from the simple pine sauna to include steamrooms, spa and hydro pools, feature showers and foot spas, and a wide variety of heat experience rooms such as Rasul mud chambers, aromatherapy and salt vapour rooms.

In addition, Dalesauna offers unrivalled after sales support, with 10 fully qualified electricians nationwide, offering both repair and planned maintenance. Dalesauna also offers a huge range of consumables and chemicals for the swimming pool and leisure club market at very competitive prices. Call on our stand P15 to see what offers we have available for LIW.

Section: **Pool & Spa**

Dalesauna is celebrating 30 years in the industry



Discover the Future of Fitness

Your members expect the latest technology to get the results they want – and fast. The new Power Plate® pro6™ model with proMOTION™ technology is the innovative fitness concept that combines Acceleration Training™ with cable resistance, so your members can perform a complete total-body workout using just one piece of equipment. The cables extend more than two metres in any direction, and have two resistance settings, offering a virtually limitless range of dynamic exercise options.

Experience the pro6 machine yourself by visiting us at Stand HF1, at LIW.

For more information call 020 7586 7200 or visit www.powerplate.co.uk



We provide all the necessary tools to market Power Plate equipment to your members, as well as on-site workshops and ongoing REPS accredited training for your staff.



Bringing the outdoors to your youth activity zone

Safe, challenging, basic real climbing experience that kids love! Make it COOL to exercise.

Freedom Climber gives kids a great fun activity whilst providing fundamental fitness benefits, such as total body & core muscle development, co-ordination, flexibility and balance.

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No gimmicks... just good clean fun!

See us at LIW Stand H249

Call 01483 559785 for a demonstration or email info@freedomclimber.co.uk for more details

View the video at www.freedomclimber.co.uk

As featured on the GADGET SHOW



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www.frutina.com

Exhibitor News



Dynamic Activity will be showing its Vert-Osc technology

DYNAMIC ACTIVITY

Tel: +44 (0)1256 316180

www.dynamicactivity.com

Dynamic Activity is exhibiting the unique and innovative body-core functional training platforms. Developed for functional training, bodycore can be used in conjunction with a variety of other fitness equipment, gaining unparalleled results.

Using Vert-Osc technology, bodycore's natural vertical movement uniquely accentuates the power of gravity to increase intensity without compromising technique; delivering safe, fast and effective results, while promoting full dynamic movement. The complete range of platforms is being showcased on stand H89.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

ESCAPE FITNESS

Tel: +44 (0)1733 313 535

www.escapefitness.com

Every year Escape's passion for fitness takes the company to new heights and the same can be said for its LIW 2010 stand.

Lucky Escape visitors can expect new training ideas, business boasting workouts, profitable programme advice, new Move It spaces, tougher challenges, exciting demonstrations, the unmissable launch of the new TRX, a celebrity surprise and much more. The fantastic Escape team will also be there getting you motivated to Move it!

Section: **Health & Fitness**



The Escape Fitness team will get you motivated!

Gosh...it's nearly as hot as a Dalesauna!




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Exhibitor News

LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
21-23 Sept 2010 - NEC Birmingham UK

EXPERT TICKET

Tel: +44 (0)1226 779956

www.expertticket.co.uk

Expert Ticket is an easy to use innovative system that provides customers with a fast, efficient and convenient way to visit attractions, events and festivals, with no extra costs or charges over and above the advertised ticket price.

The modular approach means attractions can choose to incorporate online ticketing, admissions, retail management solutions and access control, or a combination of these appropriate to your business. The system is fully HMRC compliant for gift aid processing.

Section: **Play & Attractions**



FIGHT FIT LTD

Tel: +44 (0)207 788 7825

www.fightfit.co.uk

Fight Fit will
launch its new
training licenses
at LIW this year.
Visit the company
on stand H405

At this year's LIW Fight Fit, the UK's number one in Boxing for Fitness, officially releases its license to gyms and health clubs nationwide, giving gyms the opportunity to deliver Fight Fit 6-week Boxing for Fitness courses to existing members, attract new members and boost revenues.

To offer your first Fight Fit course free of charge visit Fight Fit at stand H405 at LIW or contact Fight Fit on 020 7788 7825.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

Athena Locker Range

elegance without compromise

The locker of
choice for both
wet and dry
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changing areas

**Launching Athena
Range at LIW 2010.
Join us at stand F55**

Garran 
leisure solutions

www.garranleisure.co.uk
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21-23 September 2010
NEC Birmingham, UK
Stand F26

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UKSales@RetentionManagement.com
www.RetentionManagement.com

PHOTO: WWW.SPOTENGLAND.ORG



Fitness Mad will display a range of fitness equipment for Pilates, yoga and studio workouts

FITNESS-MAD

Tel: +44 (0)1386 859 551
www.Fitness-mad.com

Fitness-Mad is exhibiting its Studio Pro range of top quality, innovative fitness equipment, designed for safety, durability and ease of use by PTs and in commercial fitness environments.

All products combine market-leading performance with excellent value. Fitness-Mad is a specialist in fitness equipment and accessories for core stability, resistance, strength, boxing, yoga and Pilates. Also see an extensive range of studio, yoga and Pilates equipment from the company's market-leading sister brands
Section: Health & Fitness

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www.focus-training.com

Train your team for less and at your convenience, with Focus Training, the specialists in employee training for the fitness industry. From one-day CPD workshops to a full range of Level 2 and 3 CYQ courses Focus offers great value, high-quality training, tailored to meet your business needs. On dates you choose, expert tutors come to your facility, saving valuable time and staff travel costs, as well as enabling you to qualify for attractive group discounts.

Section: Health & Fitness

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The most exciting addition to your cardio floor in 10 years! From its embedded touch screen to its virtual Spinning® instructor - It is the newest level in cardio. Now users of all levels can experience the coaching, motivation and intensity of music, video and a virtual Spinning® class whenever they want.

Come and see us at Leisure Industry Week on Stand HF 2 to experience the revolutionary eSpinner®. For more information visit

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Number H 147



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Exhibitor News

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Buyers will visit
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latest products
and services

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Climbing provides a great functional, total body training exercise which is both challenging and fun for adults and kids. Perfect for clubs looking for something different for their members in the gym, studio or functional training area and great for kids zones and inter-active play areas. Try FreedomClimbing in the Functional Training Zone at Leisure Industry Week.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

FRUTINA LTD

Tel: +44 (0)2380 211550
www.frutina.com

This year, Frutina will be exhibiting its extended range of drink solutions for the leisure and attractions market.

As well as its standard slush drink, Frutina will exhibit its juice drink slush range. There will also be a new range of postmix drinks available and the company will also be exhibiting a new range of Lavazza Blue coffee Pod machines, which are ideal for a whole range of leisure-related outlets. Visit Frutina on Stand E5.

Section: **Eat & Drink**



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See us at
LIW
stand No.
A175

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www.innovativeleisure.co.uk

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For more information on how to obtain your PPL music licence[†] visit **ppluk.com** or call **020 7534 1070**.

To find out more on how music can work for you visit **musicworksforyou.com**.



* MusicWorks survey of 2000 people, conducted March 2009

[†] If you play recorded music in public it is a legal requirement to obtain the correct PPL licence, failure to do so may result in legal action. PPL is different from PRS for Music. PPL collects and distributes money on behalf of record companies and performers whilst PRS for Music collects and distributes money on behalf of songwriters, composers and publishers. Both licences must be obtained to ensure all copyright holders are fairly paid.



ppluk.com



Garran will launch its range of Athena Lockers at LIW

GARRAN LEISURE SOLUTIONS

Tel: +44 (0)845 6588600

www.garranleisure.co.uk

Garran Leisure Solutions has over 50 years' experience in designing, manufacturing and installing quality lockers.

The new Athena Range has been created specifically for the leisure industry and combines security with strength and practicality. The range comes in two design concepts, Athena Line and Athena Edge, meeting the distinct demands of the sectors.

Athena lockers are perfectly suited to swimming pools and entertainment venues, where resistance to vandalism and ease of cleaning are important factors for specifiers, as well as hotels, health and fitness changing rooms, where quality and aesthetics are the key selection criteria.

Available in a wide range of colours, Athena lockers are constructed with aluminium bodies, complemented by solid grade laminate doors and internal, high-impact polymer shelving. Garran Leisure Solutions is one of a few locker manufacturers capable of offering a complete and tailor made service from design through to manufacturing and installation.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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www.gladstonemrm.com

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Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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Section: **Leisure Facilities**



LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
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INNOVATIVE LEISURE

Tel: +44 (0)1162 887263
www.innovativeleisure.co.uk

Innovative Leisure Ltd is the exclusive UK and European distributor of a range of high-energy, interactive, family attractions suitable for use in a variety of venues, shows and events. The company will have exhibits both inside and outside at this year's LIW. Inside will be a Coconut Tree Climb, DigWall, an indoor climbing tower, modular climbing panels and a working belay. Outside will be a fully operational Water Wars and various climbing attractions. Innovative Leisure will also be highlighting the latest addition to its range – major High Ropes courses – the first of which opened at Edinburgh Zoo this year.

Section: **Play & Attractions**

Innovative Leisure's DigWall will be on show at LIW

JORDAN FITNESS

Tel: +44 (0)1945 880257
www.jordanfitness.co.uk

Jordan Fitness launches its 'Jordan Training Academy' at this year's LIW.

Representatives from the Academy will be available to discuss the wide range of programmes that are available.

Jordan will also be introducing its Studio Powerbag. This is a version of the original Powerbag that has been modified for the studio environment. An extra handle has been added for versatility, and each size is colour-coded. Demonstrations will take place in the Functional Training Zone during the exhibition. Come along to the Jordan stand H147, Hall 17 to meet key members of the team or contact sales@jordanfitness.co.uk to find out more.

Section: **Health & Fitness**



Jordan's Studio Powerbag has been redesigned with an extra handle for the studio environment

Back: Bigger: Better:


Making
software
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Stand S40

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www.swan.ch

SWAN ANALYTICAL UK LIMITED - Unit 3 The Steading - Copthill Farm
 Deeping Road - Stamford PE9 4TD - salesUK@swan.ch - Phone 01780755500

Exhibitor News



Leisure Lines will be
exhibiting a range of
strength equipment

LEISURE LINES GB LTD

Tel: +44 (0)1455 890100

www.leisurelinesgb.co.uk

Leisure Lines will be exhibiting its UK-manufactured equipment at LIW for the first time in 12 years.

The range includes rugged, reliable, unique and highly functional products for developing real-world strength and power through brands which include R2 Strength, Iso-Lever and Unique Strength.

Items on show will include performance stations, freeweight and plate loaded equipment, plus the Powerbag.

Over the last four years, as well as manufacturing for the trade, Leisure Lines has developed a range of equipment solutions for the performance sport, military and uniformed services markets.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

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Tony Barry
Director
Workout Magazine



The Worldwide Leader in Health Club Promotions



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UK



IRELAND



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CANADA

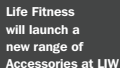


AUS



www.creativefitness.net

Call CFM today on 0115-955-6667 Or Visit us at LIW (Stand H200)



Tel: +44 1353 666017
www.lifefitness.com

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Section: Health & Fitness



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www.creativefitness.net





PHOTO: WWW.BLOOMPHOTO.COM

Over 300 companies will
be exhibiting at this year's
Leisure Industry Week

MAGIC MEMORIES

Tel: +44 (0)20 3326 1200

www.magicmemories.com

Magic Memories is the established global leader in tourism photography, providing a proven solution to add revenue and marketing reach to tourism attractions.

The company's three guiding principles are improving visitor experiences, increasing yield for tourism attractions and helping them to leverage their brands.

With 15 years' experience, Magic Memories continues to develop and refine leading image capture products and systems for tourism attractions around the world.

The company's range of on-site and online products will exceed visitors' expectations, providing attractions with the perfect final touch. Printed, packaged and presented at the exit, the products are rich with photos and information about the attraction; empowering visitors to share their stories.

Section: **Play & Attractions**



LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
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MATRIX FITNESS SYSTEMS

Tel: +44 (0)1782 644900

www.matrixfitness.co.uk

Matrix Fitness Systems' goal is to make commercial fitness equipment that stands out and sets new industry standards. The company is dedicated to product innovation and engineering solutions based around customers' needs, solid construction, enhanced ergonomics and styling. With Matrix equipment you can expect more.

Innovations set to captivate at LIW this year include: Virtual Active

– the UK launch of this revolutionary interactive workout experience on Matrix 7xe CV products. Users can 'escape' to a variety of destinations which they will see, hear and feel, enabling total immersion in this experiential workout. **LIVESTRONG®** by Matrix Indoor Cycles: This is the UK launch of these new indoor cycles, inspired and endorsed by Lance Armstrong and the **LIVESTRONG®** Foundation.

This partnership is not just about equipment, it's about being part of a community – one that's united in improving health, supporting each other and joining the fight against cancer. Johnny G Krankcycle by Matrix: Focusing on the upper body as a way to build aerobic capacity, strength, endurance and core stability – the latest innovation in group exercise provision. **G7 Strength range**: Official launch of the extended range of G7 strength products, complete with wireless Fitlinx connectivity solution. Come and see us at stand H103.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

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- Monitors attendance
- Targets interactions
- Measures effectiveness
- Manages performance

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See us at
Leisure
Industry Week
Stand F29



A wide range of sport and leisure facility providers will be on show at LIW

NEPTUNUS LTD

Tel: +44 (0)845 180 4001
www.neptunus.co.uk

Are you going to rebuild, and do you need access to substitute accommodation in the meantime? Has a fire or other calamity occurred, which means you have to quickly restart your business in emergency facilities? Or do you have short-term requirements for some temporary extra space? If so, Neptunus can help. The company is a specialist in the design and installation of temporary structures and semi-permanent buildings.

Any application you can think of is possible, whether you need semi-permanent sports facilities, a temporary solution to cover your existing outdoor area, or a large multi-day sports tournament.

Due to the very short delivery and assembly time, as well as flexible dimensions, a clear span of up to at least 60m, and the look and properties of a permanent building, all these things are possible. Semi-permanent building can be hired, leased or bought for a period of several weeks, months or even years.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

OCTANE FITNESS UK LTD

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www.octanefitness.com

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Section: **Health & Fitness**

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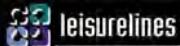


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www.powerbag.com
www.leisurelinesperformance.com

Email (sales): sales@leisurelinesgb.co.uk

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Exhibitor News

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Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
21-23 Sept 2010 - NEC Birmingham UK



Pellikaan has built over 500 swimming pools across Europe

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www.pellikaan.com

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Section: **Leisure Facilities**

PHYSICAL COMPANY LTD & GRAVITY UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1494 769 222

www.physicalcompany.co.uk

Physical Company is launching its new 2010/2011 product catalogue at this year's show.

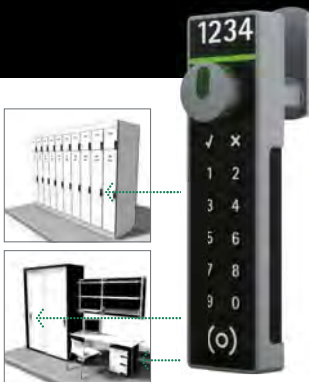
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You can try the new Flowin' Friction Trainer and check out the new Club Storage Racks. In addition, GRAVITY UK is exhibiting on stand H25, so come along for your free demonstration on the Total Gym GTS and the IFI accredited Total Gym Power Tower.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

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Exhibitor News



Power Plate International
is launching proMOTION
technology at LIW

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Tel: +44 (0)20 7586 7200

www.powerplate.com

Power Plate International continues to lead the way in Acceleration Training™, as visitors to this year's Leisure Industry Week (LIW) can experience firsthand when they try the newest fitness innovation – the Power Plate® pro6™ with proMOTION™ technology. The new pro6 unites two proven exercise methods; cable-resistance and vibration training for the first time ever, by seamlessly integrating patented cable resistance technology.

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Section: **Health & Fitness**

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Exhibitor News

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PPL says paying to play music is a legal requirement

PPL

Tel: +44 (0)207 534 1000

www.ppluk.com

PPL is the music licensing company that provides convenient solutions for businesses that play recorded music in public.

A PPL licence can cost from as little as 14 pence per day and there are a number of different tariffs available to cater for every type of business. It's a legal requirement to have a PPL licence and it is the responsibility of the business owner to ensure they have the correct licence. Failure to do so can ultimately result in legal proceedings.

Playing music in your leisure establishment can have many rewards, it can increase staff productivity, keep clients energised and improve atmosphere. There are also financial benefits, with 85 per cent of gym users willing to pay 5 per cent more for membership at a venue that plays music. More information can be found at musicworksforyou.com

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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www.precor.com

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Section: **Health & Fitness**



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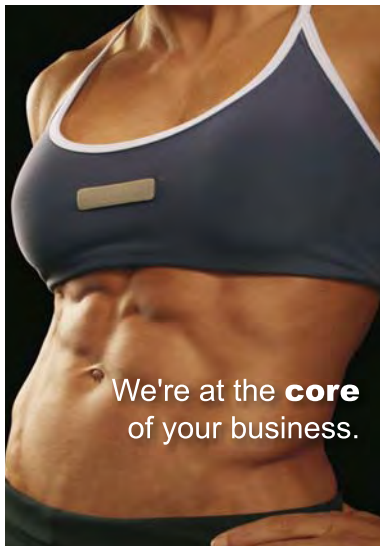
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PULSE

Pulse is celebrating its 30th anniversary

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www.pulsefitness.com

Pulse will be revealing 30 years of innovation at LIW 2010. Most significantly with the proud unveiling of the intelligently engineered, innovative 'Fusion' range of cardiovascular equipment. The new range combines the very latest in audio visual technology, with unique 'Green' features, making it one of the most advanced and environmentally responsible ranges of cardiovascular equipment available on the market. Pulse's 30th anniversary also marks the completion of the company's first environmentally 'A' rated swimming and leisure development and its premier 5-a-side soccer complex. All this, combined with Pulse's exciting range of children's interactive fitness products, shows that the company's commitment to providing a total leisure solution is as strong today as it was thirty years ago. Pulse truly believes leisure operators will be amazed by the unique, cost-effective, innovative leisure and fitness solutions they can see, trial and discuss if they visit Pulse on stand H100.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

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www.RENCO.CO.UK

Renco Nets was established in 1988 and is a supplier to various industries such as leisure, sport, fishing, industrial, waste disposal and many more.

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Section: **Play & Attractions**



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www.safespacelockers.co.uk

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Safe Space Lockers has a mission statement to deliver the most appropriate solution to the client – with integrity and honesty. The company's primary concern is delivering the project in the agreed time and within budget.

Section: **Health & Fitness**

Speedo is showcasing its new Learn to Swim range at LIW 2010

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Section: **Health & Fitness**

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www.store.speedo.co.uk

Speedo is introducing its Sea Squad product range at this year's event to showcase the new Learn To Swim range. The company is also promoting swim fitness aids, from weightbelts to dumbbells and even its market-leading Aquabeat waterproof MP3 player! Speedo will also show a fantastic range of training aids with cutting-edge BioFuse technology, as well as its core essentials range. Make sure you visit Speedo on P22 to find out more!

Section: **Pool & Spa**

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Exhibitor News

LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK
21-23 Sept 2010 - NEC Birmingham UK



Sportsoft will be showing its web-based management system at LIW

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Add the ability to book classes and a content management system, which lets you update the website and you will benefit on all fronts. SportSoft has developed such a system, so why wait? Call us to find out more.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

SUNTRAP SYSTEMS

Tel: +44 (0)121 428 1155
www.suntrap-systems.co.uk

Suntrap Systems has supplied its fully automatic Portable Pro swimming pool lift to a temporary pool, which was officially opened by Duncan Goodhew in Coventry at the end of August.

The pool – the largest temporary swimming pool so far constructed in the UK – was installed by Bury-based Total Swimming and will stay open for 12 weeks while the nearby Xcel Leisure Centre undergoes a refurbishment.

Suntrap's lift is powered by a 24V rechargeable battery and operated by waterproof remote control, which requires no fixings in the poolside, making it ideal for this temporary location. It will provide access for disabled swimmers during the lifetime of the installation and once the refurbishment is complete, will be installed in the leisure centre's swimming pool.

Suntrap will exhibit the Portable Pro on Stand P105 in Hall 18 during LIW, along with two other budget-priced lifts with alternative seating options and a new transporter cradle.

Section: **Pool & Spa**

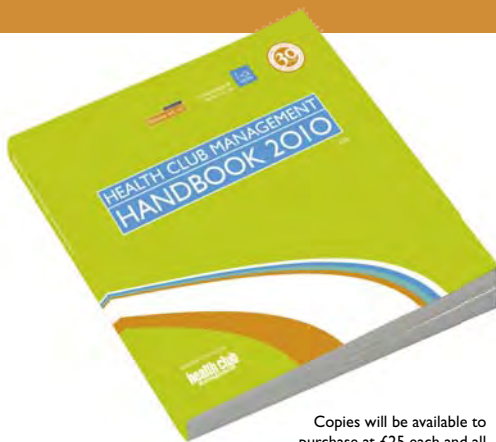


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21-23 Sept 2010 - NEC Birmingham UK

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Section: **Health & Fitness**

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Products have been designed specifically for the health and fitness industry and for all kinds of exerciser, from class enthusiast, swimmer and athlete to health-conscious parent or strength trainer, the bespoke product choice offers nutritional formulas of the highest quality.

Direct product sampling, member seminars, staff training and incentives are all part of Ultra-Body's service package, alongside marketing tools and campaigns. The company's aim is to help increase revenue for each and every client.

Section: **Health & Fitness**



Ultrabody's range of supplements will be on show at LIW 2010

Vennersys integrates CRM data with other transactions



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Section: **Play & Attractions**

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www.vgymuk.com

With 10 years' of vibration training experience Vibrogym is committed to helping gyms, health clubs, physios, personal trainers and the general public to get the best out of their vibration machines.

Vibration has proved it's not a fad and is now widely accepted in the industry. For more details, visit the website of VibroGym UK, the first company to introduce a whole-body vibration plate to the industry. www.vgymuk.com

Section: **Health & Fitness**

XN LEISURE

Tel: +44 (0)870 80 30 700
www.xnleisure.com

Xn Leisure will launch its exciting self-service modules at LIW, as it continues to support the industry with benefit-packed innovations.

These latest additions will offer better leverage of existing resources, increasing profitability and efficiency and reinforcing Xn Leisure as the leading solutions provider for the industry.

Sessions, courses and activities can be booked online with the XN system, empowering members to book and purchase at a time convenient to them. Online booking is designed to complement existing services, offering an alternative to telephone booking and alleviating pressure on your front desk, allowing your front of house team to be truly service-orientated.

Also on show will be Kiosks which allow customers to self-serve everything from checking-in for a course, right through to rebooking a session for the following week or the purchasing of activities. Customer feedback functions for members and non-members complete the solution. You can extend your membership sales team by allowing visitors to your website to join online, easing the burden on your front of house operations. Additional functionality allows existing members to renew their memberships, aiding your cashflow and allowing members to renew at their convenience.

Section: **Leisure Facilities**

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Event Overview

Now in its tenth year, the Annual IHRSA European Congress provides health club owners and operators the chance to gather to discuss the European market, its challenges and opportunities, and the impact the global market has on the region.

This multi-faceted event will include strategy-focused seminars for CEOs and executive staff, as well as an operations track for those who want to focus on the day-to-day running of their clubs. Networking icebreakers, special activities for first-time attendees, focus group discussions, and evening and lunch receptions will give you the opportunity to build relationships with your colleagues from throughout Europe.

Additional Highlights Include:

- Two days of seminars targeting opportunities to help you sustain and grow a profitable fitness business
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- Tours of some of Barcelona's finest health clubs
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International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association

event review

shaping the future

Nigel Wallace, director of training at Lifetime, reports on its recent fitness directors' summit

THE DELEGATES

JON GILES, operations director, Jubilee Hall Trust
 RICHARD COWLEY, group health & wellbeing manager, DC Leisure
 MICHELLE BLETSON, group exercise manager, SLM
 TAMARA BAILEY, health and fitness manager, Halo Leisure
 KEVIN YATES, head of commercial development, Leisure Connection
 KATE FEARON, group fitness manager, Active Nation
 MARK TALLEY, fitness director, LA Fitness
 LISA TAYLOR, strategic partnerships director, MEND

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Meeting to discuss issues affecting the future growth of our sector, delegates at this year's Fitness Directors' Summit were challenged to step outside of their comfort zones and look at the sector from an aerial view. In particular, delegates discussed the changes occurring within the NHS as a result of the new coalition government, and considered the future direction of the health and fitness sector.

putting the health into 'health and fitness'

Dr Tim Anstiss, a medical doctor specialising in health and wellbeing improvement, kicked off the session by exploring how the new coalition government is proposing to distribute funding. As part of the government's 'Big Society' strategy, 500 GP commissioning groups across the country will replace the 152 Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and will be given much more control over how NHS funding will be spent on a local level.

The FIA is driving a top-down agenda to engage with the medical community through a Joint Consultative Forum; by working together, operators can play a part in improving the health of the nation.

Delegate Jon Giles said: "GPs are local people, in touch with their local community. The move to GP fiscal power will help communities look after their personal wellbeing and should help tackle local issues quicker."

can you overdose on exercise?

A discussion driven by Ben Jones, teaching and curriculum manager at Lifetime, explored the population's trend towards "older, fatter, sicker" and the opportunity for operators to develop solutions that tackle the issue. The debate around the current ACSM risk stratification terminology of low, medium and high risk concluded that, although the guidelines are appropriate, the terminology isn't helpful and cultural sensitivity is required when adopting US guidelines in the UK.

Delegates agreed that their teams needed to be trained to a higher standard, with qualifications such as exercise referral, so that they can work better with this population group.

Richard Cowley commented: "If we can create a social hub for each family unit, we can educate our next generation about the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle. It's essential that we welcome the older generation, as well as those who perceive leisure centres to be just for fit gym-goers."

A joined-up approach between the fitness industry and the health sector was discussed by delegates

As a way of identifying a vision for the industry, the delegates then asked themselves: 'What do we like about the sector?' They highlighted the sense of pride in the thriving industry and the challenge to deliver real results; all were in agreement that the bringing together of health and wellbeing to present low-cost and accessible amenities is key to the sector's future.

food for thought

Giles observed: "Our facilities need to be more than a physical space filled with exercise equipment: all of us must engage at community level. We must also connect far beyond the first 10 minutes it takes to sell a membership."

Cowley added: "We must create a joined-up approach between us and the health sector. We should strive towards the development of more socially inclusive programming."

Lifetime now plans to host a number of events that will review the progress in the delegates' own environments; this was viewed as a key output by the attendees. A social networking site will also support ongoing dialogue.

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GO APE FOR THIS CHARITY FUN RUN

If you're looking for a unique challenge and if you like dressing up, then the Great Gorilla Run in the heart of London this month is the answer.

More than 1,000 gorilla suit-wearing people are expected to turn up on 26 September for this 7km flat route, which takes in famous sights such as Tower Bridge and The Tate Modern.

The entry fee is £80 and includes the cost of your gorilla suit (in medium, large and extra large) that you can customise – think ballerina-, disco- or policeman-gorilla! There will also be a prize for the biggest team or 'gorilla family'.

Minimum sponsorship is £400 – proceeds go to The Gorilla Organization, which aims to save the remaining 720 mountain gorillas left in the wild.

The first Great Gorilla Run was held in 2003 and advocate Bill Oddie describes it as "the most fun event for conservation going on anywhere in the world." Details: www.greatgorillas.org/london



EXERCISE AND A CUPPA TO HELP MENTAL HEALTH

Encouraging older adults to relax with a cup of tea or coffee after their workout could help protect them against mental decline, according to two recent, independent US studies.

The first study, by the Harvard Medical School, showed that elderly people who engaged in moderate to heavy levels of exercise had a 40 per cent lower risk of developing dementia.

The second, from the University of California, found that over-65s who drank tea regularly were between 17 and 37 per cent less likely to suffer a reduction in mental ability. Drinking coffee regularly lowered the chances of mental decline by 20 per cent.



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PING PONG EVENT HITS THE UK

Ping-pong tables were lined up across the concourse of London's St Pancras International station on 22 July to launch a month-long scheme to get more people playing the sport.

Elsewhere, 100 tables were set up around the capital as part of the Ping! initiative. The English Table Tennis Association and the arts group, Sing London, teamed up to deliver the Sport England-funded scheme that provided tables for free, impromptu use. A series of masterclasses, competitions and other activities were also planned. Around half of the tables will be retained on a permanent basis.

Ping! will be delivered in four more UK cities over the next two years.

in-car t'ai chi guide for uk drivers

The UK's first in-car t'ai chi guide has been launched by used car website motors.co.uk to help keep drivers calm behind the wheel.

Motors.co.uk teamed up with former karate champion Dean Hodgkin to create a programme of t'ai chi movements and breathing exercises that can be performed in the car seat and which are intended to take the stress out of driving on the UK's roads.

The movements can be viewed online via the website or on YouTube and then recreated in the car. There are 10 simple exercises that are designed to help motorists calm on the school run, to boost concentration on long commutes or to even help with circulation and flexibility when stuck in traffic queues.

The exercises are also intended to help motorists deal with the stress of buying a new car.

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