

health club management

JULY 2012



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INTERVIEW

DAVID LONG

The CEO of Orangetheory Fitness
on the international rollout of
its 'ultimate workout'

It's a HIT

The emergence of
high-intensity
interval training

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Getting results

In today's time-poor society, members don't want to toil for hours in the gym; they want results, and they want them fast. In response to this, we're witnessing a surge in 30-minute workouts, from operators whose very concept is rooted in the idea – Curves, Vivafit and Fit n Fast, to name but a few – to a growing raft of suppliers all launching their own take on 30-minute programming.

With its member-centric focus on quick results, the 30-minute package surely has a role to play in every gym. Yet how many clubs still leave the vast majority of their members to get quietly on with their own workouts – workouts that are rarely updated, that perhaps weren't even created by the gym in the first place, and that certainly aren't designed to meet members' specific goals or help them progress in any way. Most operators will distance themselves from the image I'm painting, but the sad truth is that I and my colleagues belong to a number of gyms where this is the norm.

So how do we get results for our members? Currently at the forefront of many people's thinking – and linked closely to the 30-minute workout – is the latest buzz-term: high-intensity interval training, or HIT for short. Precise definitions vary, but at the heart of HIT lie the principles

encapsulated in fartlek training: intervals of (very hard) work followed by rest intervals.

On page 40 of this issue, in the first of a two-part series on HIT, we investigate the science behind the discipline, which has been scientifically proven to deliver enhanced results in a far shorter timeframe than steady-state, moderate intensity exercise. These include improvements in VO₂ max, insulin sensitivity, blood pressure and levels of body fat.

That's all great, but with these benefits comes a need for genuine physical exertion. People have to really push themselves, rather than simply going through the motions and

HIT's focus on results represents a huge opportunity to motivate and retain members – the holy grail for health club operators and a driver of long-term business health

putting a self-congratulatory tick in the 'gym visit' box. The challenge is therefore to make HIT fun, and appealing to less fit members. CrossFit has built its success around the HIT concept, but its facilities tend to attract the hard-core exerciser – so how can we translate HIT to the high street gym environment?

Much of it will be down to the calibre of the instructors, who will need excellent motivational and communication skills. But it's also, of course, down to the programming. In the second part of our series, which will appear in the August issue of *HCM*, we'll discuss ways in which HIT protocols can be used with all fitness levels. We'll also look at operators such as Orangetheory Fitness (see also p30 of this issue), whose model is based around HIT as a standalone concept, and at ways of bringing HIT to the group exercise studio, with the UK launch of the new LES MILLS GRIT™ SERIES scheduled for September.

But before we consider its implementation, a precursor question: benefits for the consumer aside, why should a gym introduce HIT? There's certainly potential for short-term financial reward: in many cases, HIT effectively becomes small group training, and charging an additional fee may be an option. But HIT's focus on results also represents a huge opportunity to motivate and retain members – the holy grail for operators and a driver of long-term business health. As CFM's Dave Wright says in his letter (see p6), if clubs can get quick results for their members, they need "never worry about competition again".

Kate Cracknell, editor – katecracknell@leisuremedia.com / twitter: @HealthClubKate
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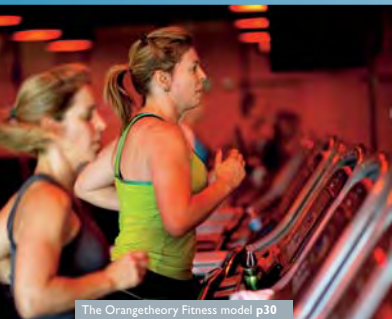
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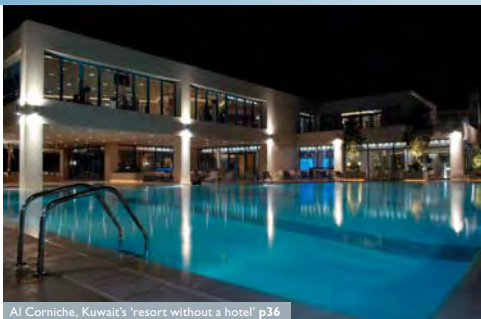
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to keep your gym at the forefront

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Make sure your fridge is stocked up
with watercress, and ladies, you might
like to work your abs at the gym!

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



Lomax 'fitness pods' contain everything you need for a complete workout

pricing it low and delivering high – the lomax model

In *HCM* May (p3), you debated the possibility of premium quality at low cost. The market currently seems polarised – low cost without specialisation, or high cost with a focused fitness element (eg OrangeTheory Fitness and BOOM! Cycle).

Lomax Bespoke Fitness, Nutrition and Wellbeing bridges that pricing gap and operates as a place where people can feel at home, relaxed and taken care of while reaching their fitness and health goals.

Running an in-home business since 2007, I have listened to my clients telling me why they chose to leave their big health clubs. In March 2011, I took a great deal of what they had to tell me, combined it with what I knew to be true with respect to space and time needed for fitness, and opened our first London space, closely followed by our second in February 2012. With no membership or joining fee, our 'pay as you go' sites offer

a unique fitness experience ('podular' training and classes all based on metabolic conditioning) while giving the customer a luxurious experience thanks to our integrated services.

Our staggered pricing structure offers something for every client, from entry-level class-based training through to PT services, group cycling and fusion pilates. Hire of our unique fitness pods – spaces that hold everything you need for a complete workout – starts at £5.

While many seem to think they either have to dumb it down and price it low or else find a very small niche, we're bucking the trend by pricing low and consistently surprising and delighting our clients with just how luxurious and tailored an experience they receive.

jonathan lomax
ceo/founder, lomax bespoke fitness
nutrition & wellbeing

gyms must deliver quick results for members

I really liked your piece on premium value clubs (see *HCM* May 12, p3). The one thing that underpins it all is the importance of 'value' rather than 'price' – in any sector, if value outweighs cost, you get the business every single time.

Discussion continues around the budget clubs: whether they're good for the industry in the long term or just brilliant for the 'easy in, easy out' investor; whether they deliver the guidance needed to get results for members; and so on. However, the one great thing they do do is raise the standards of everyone else in the marketplace – in the same way that British Airways focused on business and first-class experiences while many of the cheap airlines went out of business.

It means the customer ultimately wins, with more innovative offerings such as the 'premium value' clubs you wrote about. The one thing for certain with many of the micro-gyms out there is that they more often than not guarantee results. And people want results in the quickest time possible. That's the real key: these clubs have identified that the greatest commodity of all is time, and that the money will go to the club or offering that gets results in the shortest period of time. If you crack that, you'll never worry about competition again.

dave wright
ceo, creative fitness marketing



Micro-gyms like SoulCycle operate on a 'premium value' pricing model

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ClimbMill

The Matrix ClimbMill is not just an evolution, but a revolution in stair-climbing technology.

With dozens of innovative features and attention to detail, the ClimbMill does not disappoint. Once again, we believed in better, and in doing so, have changed mindsets, standards and expectations.

Digital legacy service Spogo to launch this month

A new online resource offering the public an easy way to find sporting opportunities will launch in July as part of digital legacy plans for the 2012 Olympic Games.

Spogo will be delivered by SportEngland and the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) and is to be fully operational in time for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

According to David Stalker, FIA CEO, Spogo will make searching and finding physical activities as simple as other consumer-friendly online services.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=g5N4P>



A 120-station fitness gym is included in the plans

North Kensington leisure centre plans submitted

Plans for a new leisure centre and academy in north Kensington, London, have been submitted to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

London-based Studio E have drawn up proposals on behalf of the local authority, having been selected from a shortlist of six design practices late last year.

The leisure centre element will feature a 120-station fitness suite with the option to partition the space, a room for group cycling classes and two fitness studios.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=gol6D>

New exercise therapy room for Lincoln leisure centre

An exercise therapy and consultation room has been unveiled at Lincoln leisure centre, following a £30,000 investment by the City of Lincoln Council and Active Nation.

The Birchwood Leisure Centre room was created using existing budgets and equipment, with funding from NHS Lincolnshire to offer a space for low-impact sessions.

Three Power Plate machines have been installed, while the exercise therapy and consultation room also includes a private exercise space and a consultation area.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=14DoX>

Fitness First to sell 67 UK clubs

Fitness First has announced plans to sell 67 UK gyms and has initiated a Company Voluntary Arrangement (CVA) as part of its restructuring process.

It's expected that the CVA – to be supervised by KPMG and designed to allow the business to restructure its lease agreements – will take approximately three weeks to complete.

According to KPMG, the main components of the CVA include the continued trading of all Fitness First clubs, with 57 gyms retained at current rents paid monthly for three years, rather than quarterly.

A further five gyms will be retained at a reduced equivalent monthly rate of 65 per cent over the three-year period before returning to market-based rent. The leases to 18 other UK facilities will remain unaffected.



Clubs being sold are likely to be transferred to other operators

The clubs being sold are expected to be transferred to other operators in "most cases", with members able to move contracts to the new owners at no extra cost.

Among the Fitness First gyms to be sold include sites in Birmingham, Chelmsford, Derby, Newcastle and Stevenage, as well as five Klick-branded sites across northern England.

UK health & fitness sector worth £3.86bn

The fitness industry increased its total market value by 1.4 per cent to £3.86bn during the year to March 2012, according to the 2012 State of the UK Fitness Industry report.

The figures mean that – over the past three years – the sector's total market value is up 2.4 per cent, while there has been an increase of 3.6 per cent in membership and a 1.8 per cent growth in the total number of facilities.

At the end of March 2012, 12.1 per cent of the UK population were registered as members of a health and fitness club or publicly-owned fitness facility – compared with 11.9 per cent in March 2011.

A total of 163 new public and private facilities opened during the year to 31 March 2012 – an



The report found that membership and facility numbers have increased

increase on previous years (149 in 2011, 122 in 2010 and 114 openings in 2009).

The report is compiled by independent analysts The Leisure Database Company. Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=k8k1r>

Minister: "Coaches key to 2012 legacy success"

Sports coaches and fitness professionals will play a critical part in creating a lasting physical activity legacy after the London 2012 Games, says sports minister Hugh Robertson.

Speaking at the annual UK Coaching Summit on 28 May, Robertson said the Games

provide a chance "like never before" to raise the profile of sports coaching. He said: "Behind all great athletes there stands a great coach. We need more people to take on these roles."

Over 1.1 million people are involved in coaching in the UK; 76 per cent are volunteers.

Meditation partnership for FIA

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has signed a partnership deal with the Meditation Foundation.

As a result, the Meditation Foundation will become a FIA Vanguard member and will support the association's initiatives with GPs, healthcare providers, educational institutions and social/community groups.

The partnership will look to provide FIA members with the opportunity to experience a Meditation and Mindfulness

for Health and Wellbeing programme, which can be used as an additional revenue stream alongside traditional group exercise. There will also be an accredited teacher training programmes for members of staff.

FIA chief executive David Stalker says: "This partnership highlights our extending role to work across all aspects of health and wellbeing.



FIA members will be able to add meditation classes to their offering

Evidence-based research supports the benefits of meditation and mindfulness in public health, and we are looking forward to working closely with the foundation to establish core programmes and teacher training initiatives to help us create a healthier nation."

The long-term programme will also tie in with National Stress Awareness Day.

énergie cancels float and opts for PE deal

Health club franchise énergie Group has withdrawn from its planned initial public offering (IPO) due to the combination of volatile market conditions and a "very attractive offer" from a private equity firm.

The énergie Group, which operates 98 clubs across six countries, had previously set out plans to list on the London Stock Exchange's Alternative Investment Market (AIM).

The IPO was to take place by means of a reverse acquisition by Hubco Investments Plc.

In a statement, however, énergie CEO Jan Spaticchia said that the private equity offer was seen to "more appropriately" recognise the value of the group than was likely to be the case with the current state of equity markets.



The énergie Group's chief executive officer Jan Spaticchia

As a result, the board made the decision that the private equity deal provided the most desirable structure to fund the next stage of the company's development.

Spaticchia says: "The offer we've received against the backdrop of uncertain market conditions made this the right choice."

Life Fitness equips independent Stamford school gym

A new sports complex to be used by students, staff and the general public opened at Stamford Endowed Schools in Stamford, Lincolnshire, last month.

The centre includes a 25m swimming pool, wet and dry areas and a hospitality zone, as well

as a health club with a fitness suite fitted with 40 pieces of equipment from Life Fitness.

Fitness equipment includes the Elevation Engage CV series as well as Signature Strength and Hammer Strength equipment.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Gt1w>

£30m Orford Park complex opens to the public

The Queen has officially unveiled a new £30m sport, health and education complex that has transformed a former landfill site in the centre of Warrington, Cheshire.

Orford Park has been developed by Warrington Borough Council and incorporates a 9,000sq m (96,875sq ft) Sports Hub with facilities such as two swimming pools and a 75-station fitness suite

The gym has been equipped by Technogym and includes the Element strength range, as well as the Excite cardio range. Other on-site facilities include three GP surgeries and a Diploma Centre for 14- to 19-year-olds.



Pozzoni have drawn up plans for the new facility

Public exhibition for new Hertfordshire facility plans

An exhibition of plans for a new facility at Cotlandswick, Hertfordshire, has been launched by St Albans City and District Council and DC Leisure Management.

Residents in London Colney have been given the opportunity to comment on proposals for the new centre, which include a 60-station gym and an exercise studio.

A single-court sports hall and synthetic turf pitches will also form part of the Pozzoni-designed leisure centre. Meanwhile, 50 per cent of the Cotlandswick site will remain as green open space.

Leisure upgrades part of Strabane's three-year plan

The upgrade and modernisation of three leisure facilities across Strabane, Northern Ireland, forms part of the local authority's new three-year corporate strategy.

Strabane District Council has committed to a £12m capital development programme between 2012 and 2015, which will improve provision. Riversdale Leisure Centre, Derg Valley Leisure Centre and Melvin Sports Complex are the three leisure facilities earmarked for improvements.

50m pool and leisure centre planned for Notts



The centre's 50m pool will be the first in the city

Nottingham is to get its first 50m swimming pool under plans for a £13.5m overhaul of Harvey Hadden Leisure Centre – the final part of the local authority's wider leisure improvement strategy.

A fitness suite, health suite and multi-use spaces for dance and movement activities are also proposed for the centre, with the revamp to complement the outdoor athletics stadium and pitches.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=SoD2g>

David Lloyd Leisure unveils Gymnastics All Stars

Health and racquet club operator David Lloyd Leisure has launched a new coaching programme designed to teach young people the core skills of gymnastics.

Gymnastics All Stars is backed by Total Gymnastics – founded by Beth Tweddle – and will help children develop skills in strength, flexibility and co-ordination.

It is initially being offered to three- and four-year-olds at eight clubs across the UK and will be extended to five- to seven-year-olds at those locations from September.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=BoT4u>

New centre to open in Rochdale

The BIG Games, a showcase of sports, arts and heritage activities, will help mark the official launch of a new £10.8m leisure centre in Rochdale, Greater Manchester, on 7 July.

Facilities at Rochdale Leisure Centre include an eight-lane, 25m swimming pool and a 17m learner pool with moveable floor.

The main fitness area incorporates more than 100 stations, including equipment supplied by Life Fitness, Trixter, Escape and Concept2, as well as Power Plate.

Life Fitness equipment and Concept2 rowing machines also feature in the activity gym area, while the studio offers 31 Star Trac Spinning bikes and Escape equipment.

The new KKA-designed centre was built by Willmott Dixon and



The town's new £10.8m leisure development has been designed by KKA

forms part of the local authority's wider £33.8m capital programme.

Rochdale Council cabinet member for culture and leisure Jacqueline Beswick says: "This is the third multi-million pound sports centre in the borough. [The centres] offer a step-change in the quality of leisure."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=G718i>

BISL report underlines leisure sector's worth

A new study commissioned by Business in Sport and Leisure (BISL) and compiled by global consulting firm Oliver Wyman has underlined the "significant contribution" of the UK leisure sector.

State of the UK Leisure Industry: A Driver for Growth – launched at an event in central London on 12 June – found that the industry generates in excess of £200bn each year. The study also reveals that leisure employs 2.6 million people, a figure second only to the retail sector, and represents 8.8 per cent of the total UK workforce. More than one fifth of 16- to 25-year-olds working in the UK (21

per cent) are currently employed within the sector, which is more than the combined total for manufacturing, construction and financial services.

BISL's report, which aims to demonstrate the role that leisure can play in creating jobs and delivering growth, contains a number of recommendations for the government to better support the sector.

Recommendations include encouraging businesses to employ more 16- to 25-year-old NEETs (those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training) through a flagship employment programme.

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New wellbeing scheme revealed

A new £37m programme has been launched to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for nearly 170,000 older people across the UK.

dallas – delivering assisted living lifestyles at scale – will examine new methods of using “innovative” products and services in order to create more independent lifestyles.

Four consortia tasked with operating the new initiative, which has been developed by the Technology Strategy Board, have secured £25m of government funding.

The consortia have also made contributions towards the dallas programme, along with funding from the National Institute for Health Research and the Scottish Government.

Year Zero will provide an online application, allowing individuals to manage personal health information, and Liverpool's Feelgood



The scheme is designed to help improve the wellbeing of older people

Factory will encourage people to plan their futures. Living It Up will develop solutions to allow Scottish communities to adopt healthy lifestyles and the UK-wide i-Focus scheme will offer services to help people feel more comfortable at home.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=1314y>

Report: Exercise 'no help for depression'

A study conducted by the University of Exeter and published in the *British Medical Journal* has claimed that regular exercise offers 'no benefit' in treating depression.

The NHS-funded study saw 361 patients being given help to boost their activity levels, in addition to receiving therapy or anti-depressants.

All patients had fewer signs of depression after a year, but there was no difference between the exercising and non-exercising groups.

The results call into question current NICE guidelines drawn up in 2004, which suggest that sufferers should do up to three exercise sessions a week. The study does, however, contradict other studies on the subject of exercise and mental health.



The new research claims exercise has no impact in treating depression

David Stalker, Fitness Industry Association CEO, says: "It's important to note that this is just one of countless studies into the complex relationship between exercise and depression." Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=Xz26f>

Gosport leisure centre to close earlier than planned

Gosport Borough Council (GBC) has revealed that Hampshire's Holbrook Leisure Centre will shut on 30 June – earlier than initially planned – due to “serious damage” to its roof.

GBC said the £35,000 cost of replacing the centre's roof could not be “justified”, with

Holbrook Leisure Centre to be replaced by the new Gosport Leisure Park in early 2013.

The new complex – to be operated by DC Leisure – will comprise a 70-station gym and is currently being built by Willmott Dixon.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=17roA>

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Emma Batchelor
Clinical Specialist in Physiotherapy,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
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Covent Garden: Functional PT

James Conci Mitchell, an ex-army lieutenant, has opened SIX3NINE – a personal training practice – transforming a disused office in Covent Garden, London, into a functional training zone offering personal training.

SIX3NINE has been set up predominantly as an open-plan gym containing a comprehensive free weights selection from Eleiko and Hammer Strength.

It has two dual adjustable pulleys supplied by Life Fitness, along with a range of specialist kit, from Bulgarian bags to TRXs.

The practice has seven pieces of commercial CV equipment including treadmills, cross-trainers, upright bikes and a rower.

There is also a specially designed treatment space, where trained staff provide sports massage and remedial treatments.

Mitchell has secured a 15-year lease agreement for the 232sq m (2,500sq ft) site,



The club has been designed as an open-plan gym with functional kit

which is being operated as personal training membership club. Memberships are available from around £70 a month, and the number of memberships has been capped at 200 to provide the “best possible environment for clients”.

The prices for personal training sessions start at £50 an hour.

Former boxer opens gym in South Wales

Former Commonwealth Games gold medallist boxer Jamie Arthur and his wife Karen have helped regenerate a local community space in rural south Wales into a inspiring training space and health club.

Starting with a derelict bingo hut in Rhydyfelin, near Pontypridd, Wales, Jamie and fitness instructor wife Karen spent six months transforming a once-redundant community building into an independent gym and community hub, branded Arthur's Gym.

Working together with UK-based equipment supplier Jordan Fitness, the couple have created a space with a heavy emphasis on boxing and boxing training.

Jamie says: “Jordan Fitness has supplied us with its Powerbags, Alpha Strong sandbags and Jungle Gym XT Suspension Training Systems, which has resulted in great customer feedback. It has really



The emphasis of Arthur's Gym is on boxing and combat training

helped us to attract members to the gym. It's fantastic to see a community gym offering so many young people opportunities within the sport, as well as promoting exercise for the older age groups”.

Arthur was crowned Welsh Super featherweight champion in 2008, and also won gold at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002.

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EFFW partnership for Active IQ Academy



EFFW has been using eLearning since May

Active IQ Academy has partnered with énergie Fitness for Women (EFFW) – the specialist female-only fitness and weight loss centre – in order to provide eLearning resources.

From May, EFFW has been using Active IQ Academy eLearning to deliver the Active IQ Level 2 Certificate in Instructing Pre-designed Exercise Sessions to all its UK staff. The partnership will help EFFW ensure that all staff are qualified to Level 2 and are included on REPs.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=Z4BoT>

Everyone Active partners with British Rowing

More than 90 Everyone Active fitness motivators will receive training from British Rowing in a bid to increase the quality of rowing instruction at facilities with indoor rowers.

The NGB will deliver seven four-hour sessions to address a gap between the popularity of indoor rowing and the standard of gym instruction. Everyone Active group fitness development manager Michelle Bleto says: "This will help us provide the best gym experience for our users."

Les Mills launches SH'BAM into UK fitness market

Group exercise programme provider Les Mills has introduced its SH'BAM programming to the UK fitness market.

Featuring simple dance moves, SH'BAM has been designed to allow people of all ability to take part.

Unlike other dance-inspired workouts that offer just one style of dance, SH'BAM combines basic dance choreography with a soundtrack of chart-topping hits, dance music, remixes of familiar classics and modern Latin tracks.

SkillsActive launches ActiveAmbition

SkillsActive has launched its new ActiveAmbition programme, in a bid to drive business growth by professionalising the active leisure sector and improving standards. The initiative will also look to raise the aspirations of current and prospective employers and employees through effective skills development.

ActiveAmbition has been part-funded by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, through the Employer Investment Fund (EIF). It will see SkillsActive working with employers, trade associations and stakeholders across the UK over the next two years. The new scheme will expand on the work undertaken on the skills protocol.

James Emmett, head of employer engagement at SkillsActive, says: "It is widely recognised



The initiative aims to professionalise the active leisure sector in the UK

that upskilling existing and new employees is vital to the growth of the sector.

"ActiveAmbition represents a framework to provide improved skills delivery for the industry, building on the work undertaken by operators during 2011 to create the Skills Protocol and a report by the Skills Protocol Employer Leadership Group (SPELG)".

Games platform and iPhone app from Fitbug



Fitbug's new Games Framework allows teams or individuals to compete against each other in virtual challenges

Fitbug Holdings, the AIM-listed provider of online personal health and wellbeing services, has launched a new Games Framework and iPhone app as an extension to fitbug.com, allowing users to increase their exposure to the Fitbug service.

Using Fitbug's recently Connected Health platform, the new Games Framework allows teams or individuals to compete against each other to complete virtual challenges.

The new capability encompasses Google map-based progress and hotspot graphics, Chatterbox and social media features, as well as team leader boards.

It builds on Fitbug's previous league challenge, Fantasy Football, and is part of the

Fitbug games offering that can be customised and branded to meet client requirements.

The new Games Framework supports Fitbug's corporate sales strategy of encouraging employee health and wellbeing – resulting in a reduction in direct medical costs and the hidden costs associated with absence.

Fitbug has also launched its first iPhone app, which allows Fitbug members to log physical activities and nutritional input, amend their goals and check their daily step progress with a new, easy-to-use mobile interface. The aim is to motivate users to track progress and encourage fitness dynamically, while on the go. The app is free and can be downloaded by Fitbug members from the App Store.

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in brief...

New territories for Vivafit

Vivafit has signed a master franchise agreement for four southern states of India – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu – with the first gym set to open next month in the city of Bangalore. With this agreement, the Portuguese brand now holds two agreements in India, with another expected for the state of Maharashtra before the end of the year.

Vivafit has also signed its first contract for Malaysia – the seventh country for the women-only fitness franchise – which allows for the opening of up to 200 gyms in that market. The contract was formalised at the end of May between Pedro Ruiz, Vivafit CEO, and Cecile Jamoulle-Ögren, who also holds a contract to open 100 gyms in Singapore.

The first Vivafit centre in Malaysia – and the sixth in Asia – will open within a few months and will be located in Kuala Lumpur. Before the end of 2012, Vivafit foresees the opening of at least two other centres in Singapore, and is negotiating its entry into the Indonesian market.

Fitness First gets functional

In Germany, Fitness First has re-opened its club in Frankfurt's MyZeil shopping centre following a refurb.

The operator worked with supplier Escape Fitness to create a 300sq m freestyle area in the gym. This has been split into eight zones, with a different emphasis in each. These include a core, balance and strength zone; a power zone; and a sprint track for speed training.

The zones are equipped with core boards, BOSUs, medicine balls, dumbbells, kettlebells, battling ropes, core bags and ViPRs, complemented by speed ladders, plyo boxes and TRX suspension trainers.

Precor enters New Zealand

Following the recent launch of its Australasia office, equipment supplier Precor has partnered with Bernspott to distribute its commercial and consumer equipment throughout New Zealand.

Signature club for UFC GYM

UFC GYM BJ Penn Hawaii opened in Honolulu in May – the fifth UFC GYM.

The 3,440sq m club has been launched in partnership with BJ Penn, Hawaiian and two-division UFC champion. "My new signature gym is not a traditional health club or just a fight

club, but offers all the tools you and your family needs to get results," says Penn.

Through its "Train Different" philosophy, UFC GYM embraces the workouts and lifestyle that have proven successful for Penn and other elite UFC athletes.

Facilities at the new club include a fitness suite with CV and resistance equipment, a dedicated grappling room, functional area and MMA zone devoted to martial arts training. There's also a large group exercise studio offering hundreds of classes every week – from TRX Suspension Training to Hot Hula, Brutal Barre and signature programming like Daily Ultimate Training. A range of youth programmes are also available.

UFC GYM is a brand extension of the Ultimate Fighting Championship, in alliance with New Evolution Ventures (NeV).



UFC GYM has opened its fifth site, in Honolulu, in partnership with BJ Penn

Polish clubs boost kids' offering

Gravitan in Poland has installed ZigZag's dance mats at two of its health sports clubs as part of the chain's junior offering.

The eight-mat Xer-dance systems, at Targowek Retail Park and Janki Shopping Park, will sit within the Gravitan Junior section of the clubs, which cater for kids from the ages of six to 12 years, offering a range of activities that aim to improve motor activity, co-ordination and fitness.

Fergus Ahern, MD of ZigZag – part of Physique Sports – says: "Gravitan health sports clubs have a really strong family theme, much like Virgin Active and David Lloyd Leisure in the UK. The dance mats fit perfectly with this, offering a fun fitness activity for the younger members."



ZigZag dance mats offer 'a fun fitness activity for the younger members'

Hard Candy Fitness opens third site

Hard Candy Fitness – the health club brand launched by Madonna in conjunction with New Evolution Ventures – has celebrated the opening of its newest location in Santiago, Chile.

The 3,000sq m facility, which opened last month, is the third Hard Candy Fitness club – clubs are already open in Mexico City and Moscow. Facilities include an aquatic centre and group fitness studios for dance, yoga, pilates and group cycling. With a high focus on design values, the club is centred around

a beautiful atrium area. Madonna is due to visit the club next month.

Hard Candy Fitness has also been strengthening its social media presence. Through fan interaction and content creation, it has seen its online social following grow significantly on several platforms. A recent 'Bring Hard Candy Fitness to My City' social media campaign produced an overwhelming global response from individuals eager to have the Hard Candy Fitness experience on their doorstep.



The new facility operates in a similar way to a private members' club, with a cap of 2,000 members

Pure Club Med Gym opens in Paris

Club Med Gym opened its latest fitness and wellbeing centre in the Place de la Bastille, in the heart of Paris, last month.

The club has been launched under the new Pure Club Med Gym brand, a concept designed to offer members additional comfort and services.

The new club has a top-end, contemporary feel, and was designed by the architectural firm Studio Marc Hertrich & Nicolas Adnet. It operates in a similar way to a private members' club, with a cap of 2,000 members.

Facilities at the 1,300sq m club include a gym equipped by Technogym – including Kinesis, Vario and Pure Strength, plus integrated VisioWeb on all CV equipment.

There's also a Pavigym small group training zone. This is complemented by a studio timetable offering over 70 sessions a week, including a number of classes exclusive to the new club. Membership costs €148 a month, paying on a month-by-month basis.

The club was designed with strong green credentials, as well as inclusivity: disabled users have full access to all facilities, from the gym equipment to the showers, hammams and saunas.

"By expanding its network with a unique concept, Club Med Gym is pursuing its development strategy and continues to strive to bring ever more satisfaction to demanding fitness and wellbeing fans," says a spokesperson.

Migros launches ELEMENTS brand

Swiss co-operative the Migros Group has unveiled its new high-end health and spa club brand, ELEMENTS.

Designed specifically for the German market, ELEMENTS clubs will measure up to 5,000sq m, including spa and hammam or swimming pool.

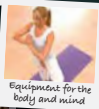
Eight sites are already in the pipeline, with the first set to open in Munich at the beginning of 2013. The remaining seven clubs will open later in 2013: three further sites for Munich, two in Frankfurt and two in Stuttgart. "Our goal is to reach market leadership in the premium segment, with

50 clubs in top locations," says René Kalt, member of the executive board and head of the recreation division of Migros Zurich.

With annual revenues of over €20bn and more than 80,000 employees, Migros is one of the largest companies in Switzerland. It is structured into five strategic business units – co-operative retailing, commerce, industry & wholesaling, financial services and travel – and already operates 44 health clubs, eight golf clubs and four sports centres in Switzerland. Its German subsidiary, Migros Freizeit Deutschland GmbH, is led by Kalt and André Ehrlich.



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BH Live CEO Peter Gunn named vice chair of sporta



Gunn has been named as sporta's new vice chair

BH Live chief executive officer Peter Gunn has been named as the new vice chair of sporta – the organisation which represents more than 900 leisure facilities operated by trusts across the UK.

The appointment was announced at the sporta AGM in Manchester last month following Jon Argent's decision to step down due to work commitments, while also studying for a doctorate.

Commenting on his appointment, Gunn says: "The opportunity to help influence the agenda, in terms of the benefits of the trust model for delivering quality culture and leisure services, is an exciting one for me."

BH Live is the leisure trust responsible for managing leisure and cultural facilities in Bournemouth. Details: www.sporta.org

IHRSA chair Art Curtis joins board of Cybex

US-based fitness equipment supplier Cybex has appointed Art Curtis, chair of the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), to its board of directors.

Curtis has held a variety of senior athletic club industry executive positions over the past 30 years. His tenure as chair of IHRSA comes to an end on 30 June.

Curtis says: "I'm privileged to join the other directors on the Cybex board. They have built a strong company in Cybex, and I'm looking forward to learning from them as we work together in the coming weeks and months."

Les Mills appoints Keith Burnet

Les Mills UK has appointed former easyGym joint CEO Keith Burnet as its new chief executive. He will work alongside interim CEO Jill Tattersall from 1 July, before assuming the role as CEO from 1 September.

Burnet brings more than 20 years' operational experience to the role. He joined easyGym in September 2010. Prior to that, he was MD of Livingwell Health and Leisure. He has also held the role of global vice president of spa and fitness at hotel giant Hilton Worldwide.

Phillip Mills, founder and CEO of Les Mills International, says: "Keith is an exceptional manager with outstanding industry experience. His operational background means that he truly understands the needs of our customers."

"The UK is an incredibly important market for us and we're delighted to have someone



Keith Burnet is the former CEO of budget health club chain easyGym

of Keith's calibre to drive the business over the coming years.

"The transitional period until September will provide Keith with the opportunity to review the global Les Mills business and to meet many of our key customers across the UK."

Tattersall will remain as a member of the Les Mills UK Board.

Alex Khan named new CEO of Lifetime

Alex Khan has been named as the new chief executive officer of training company Lifetime. With more than 12 years' experience in the training industry, Khan has joined Lifetime from his role as managing director of education and training at Babcock International Group.

Heather Frankham, founder and chair of Lifetime, says: "Alex has an excellent understanding of apprenticeship funding and delivery within Lifetime's core sectors – fitness, hospitality and care – along with a wide range of other sectors including defence, energy, emergency services, automotive and education."

Commenting on his appointment, Khan adds: "This is a time when vocational training



Khan joins Lifetime with more than 12 years' experience in training

and employability skills are highly sought after by business, and when investment in young people is key to the social and economic health of UK plc.

"With youth unemployment exceeding one million, a demand-driven approach to training and functional skills is a priority."

GRAVITY recruit to target independent operators

Rob Lisowski has joined GRAVITY UK as key account manager, both to manage existing accounts and to actively target independent and small chain operators.

Lisowski joins the fitness industry having previously been a regional sales and client service manager in the courier industry.

GRAVITY UK is the exclusive UK distributor for Total Gym, which has undergone international rebranding to coincide with the release of a new range of equipment. With the programming and training support arm of GRAVITY UK performing well, the company is expanding to increase focus on new installations.

PEOPLE PROFILE



Jan Middelkamp

A former club manager, Middelkamp has recently co-authored a book that rounds up 500 key fitness studies from across the world – giving an overview of research conducted on a number of topics

How many years have you worked in the health and fitness industry?

I started as a judo teacher in a health club when I was 15 years old. At that time, I was a member of the Dutch national team. After three years of being a judo teacher, the club owner asked me to do fitness classes too, and a few years later he asked me to become the club manager of first one club and later of two clubs.

You also have a masters degree in leisure – what did you study?

I studied exercise science at the University of Utrecht and specialised in exercise adherence (retention), management and youth sports.

How long have you been involved in research projects?

It started when I was at university, in 1994 – I worked for three years at the university in Utrecht – so 18 years now.

Could you tell us about the new book? What is the overall idea, and what topics does it cover?

The main purpose of the book – *The State of Research in the Global Fitness Industry* – is to collect, describe and disclose all the scientific research that has been done on fitness clubs worldwide – this has not been done before. The book looks at around 500 very interesting studies across a number of different topics, including: industry/market data, retention, marketing and sales, management, group fitness and PT.

What was the motivation behind the book?

We wanted to stimulate research in general, but thought that it would be important to first know what had already been researched. To my surprise, there is a lot more research on fitness clubs than everybody thinks. We've found studies in scientific databases from markets as diverse as China, Brazil and Austria.

Were there any unexpected findings while writing the book?

Yes – not least the amount of research nobody knows about! Keep in mind that this book is not about one or even a few investigations. It aims to give an overview of all the scientific research available – and there are some very, very interesting studies out there.

Who is the book targeting?

Its intended readership comprises club owners, managers, industry associations, banks and so on.

What are the book's key thoughts you'd like to offer operators?

It's crucial that the fitness industry develops a body of knowledge. We have to build our products and programmes based on evidence – this is vital if we are to build trust with consumers, banks and so on.

It's very strange that, for example, group fitness programmes are still launched globally without knowing in detail what the benefits are for participants. We know even less about what works in terms of sales and marketing, employee satisfaction etc. More is known on retention, but even here there are some huge knowledge gaps.

What do you hope to achieve with the book?

We've already had a lot of support from EHFA, and we hope that EHFA will co-ordinate the next steps in terms of research. I believe that the fitness industry has to create a masterplan on research, to ensure all of the important topics are investigated. EHFA should co-ordinate this at a European level. IHRSA could also help on a global level.

What's the number one weakness of the fitness sector?

We need a stronger focus on the behavioural aspect of our members. The biggest issue is still the low levels of retention and loyalty among members.

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GLOBAL OVERVIEW

The health and fitness industry is well positioned for steady growth, according to *The 2012 IHRSA Global Report*. Kristen Walsh offers a summary of the findings

In May, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) released *The 2012 IHRSA Global Report: The State of the Health Club Industry*. According to the report, the global health club industry generated an estimated US\$72.7bn in revenue in 2011, from more than 133,000 clubs serving 129 million members.

"Led by strong performance in the Americas, the industry is well positioned for steady growth as consumers continue to place a high value on the role health clubs play in improving their health," says Jay Ablondi, IHRSA's executive vice president of global products.

"For years, we presumed that our industry was recession-resilient; now

we know that for certain," adds IHRSA president and CEO Joe Moore. "The economic situation has tested our mettle and made us work harder than we thought possible. But we're now a better industry, and better times lie ahead."

Growth segments

Franchises, in particular, continue to perform very well. Anytime Fitness expects to continue its new club opening rate of approximately 300 clubs a year for the foreseeable future, expanding into at least three or four new countries in the next 12 months, according to Mark Daly, national media director for Anytime Fitness. The US-based company – headquartered in Hastings, Minnesota – already has nearly 1,500,000 members across 1,800 clubs worldwide.

Snap Fitness – based in Chanhassen, Minnesota, US – is also experiencing growth, with approximately 1,300 locations open worldwide and some 15–20 new clubs added on a monthly basis. And in its first year, Crunch Fitness Franchise opened 12 locations throughout the US and Australia, and has inked deals to open an additional 100 clubs throughout the US and beyond.

Meanwhile low-cost providers are "challenging the entire industry to raise its game," says Ray Algar, managing director of Oxygen Consulting, which provides strategic business insight to organisations serving the global health and fitness industry. Algar is also the author of *The 2011 Global Low-Cost Gym Sector Report*, which was supported by Precor.

"The middle market in many industries is under attack from both low-cost and premium segments," Algar says. "Consumers have high expectations even when the price they pay is low, and are no longer embarrassed by their

About The IHRSA Global Report

The 2012 IHRSA Global Report: The State of the Health Club Industry contains a comprehensive overview of global health club markets in North America, South America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and Africa. Insights from leading club companies, suppliers and associations are also included in the report.

"One of the unique aspects of *The IHRSA Global Report* is the profile information it provides on more than 270 IHRSA clubs and associate member companies," says IHRSA's Jay Ablondi. "As a convenient year-round resource, it's easy to understand why the report is consistently our best-selling item and the most requested publication by industry stakeholders, investors and the media."

The Global Report is divided into four sections:

- The Industry Overview section details the industry's performance in 2011, along with analysis and insights from industry experts and leading club operators.
- The Industry Research section includes data on revenue, number of facilities and number of club

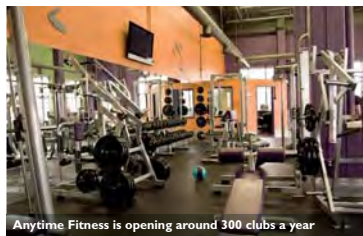


members, and highlights the top 10 global markets in these categories. Markets are also ranked by region.

- The Company Profiles section highlights more than 240 leading health club companies from around the world.
- The Supplier Profiles section features fitness equipment manufacturers and suppliers, whose products and services help club operators to maximise their profitability.



The health club industry caters for 129 million members around the globe



Anytime Fitness is opening around 300 clubs a year



Virtual classes can add value without too much extra cost

low-cost purchases. Rather, they talk about them openly and boast about their savings on social networks."

Low-cost fitness facilities can have a positive impact in many ways, adds Algar. "They're introducing excitement and momentum into the global health club industry. They're also challenging existing clubs to re-examine their own member proposition, because increasingly, consumers will question why they're paying high fees if they're receiving what feels, to them, like a self-service experience."

The Americas

Overall, the markets in North and South America are faring well in comparison with select European counterparts. Health club membership in the US

**"INDEPENDENT PUBLISHER IBISWORLD
SAYS THE US INDUSTRY WILL GROW BY AN
AVERAGE 2.8 PER CENT A YEAR UNTIL 2017"**

totalled 51.4 million members, compared to the 2010 figure of 50.8 million. Usage reached an all-time high of 102.5 visits per member in 2011 as revenue increased by 5 per cent to US\$21.4bn. The number of health clubs remained relatively unchanged at 29,960 units.

"Gyms and fitness clubs have been remarkably resilient," notes IBISWorld, the world's largest independent publisher of US industry research in its February 2012 report entitled *Gym*,

Health & Fitness Clubs in the US. The organisation predicts that the US health club industry will experience average annual growth of 2.8 per cent until 2017.

The markets in South America also continue to show positive growth indicators. Brazil still ranks high in the number of health club locations, second worldwide only to the US. Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, combined, serve 7.2 million members at an estimated 24,000

- clubs. Additional data and analysis is expected in the forthcoming *IHRSA Latin American Market Report*.

Europe

Collectively, the European health club industry continues to be the largest among all regions, with a market size of US\$31.2bn. Europe also has more than 43 million paying members attending nearly 48,000 clubs.

However, due largely to the economic environment, select European health club markets have encountered challenges. High VAT rates in Portugal, for example, have taken their toll on the nation's health club industry. Early estimates show a decline of 10 per cent in market size, club count and memberships. Other markets showing a slight decline in performance include Spain, Italy, Ireland and Greece.

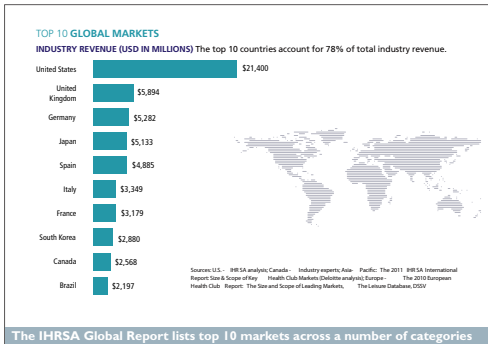
The UK recorded marginal declines in total number of health clubs and members in the 12 months to 31 March 2011. The number of health clubs decreased slightly from 5,885 to 5,852 units, and the number of members dropped from 7.4 million to 7.3 million. (Note: The Leisure Database Company in the UK released data last month for the 12 months to 31 March 2012, which reveals a more positive picture).

Although membership in Germany decreased from 7.9 million to 7.6 million, the total number of clubs grew by 600 units and 7,304 facilities.

But the recession hasn't hit the Nordic market as hard as it has other countries, reports Olav Thorstad, CEO of SATS. "Norway is taking the lead in terms of growth and will do better than feared," he says. "Sweden and Denmark are heading for brighter times and Finland has slow but continued growth. The latter part of 2012 will potentially mean an improved economic environment for the Nordics, supporting increased growth for the industry."

"In spite of challenges, the European market is home to some of the top-performing club companies," says Abbondi, "Health City International and Virgin Active, in particular, have achieved significant growth over the past few years." Health City International increased total number of units from 97 in 2007 to 270 clubs by the end of 2011, while Virgin Active increased revenues from US\$484m in 2007 to US\$829m in 2011.

Meanwhile, competition is increasing in Europe, starting at the lowest price



"EUROPE CONTINUES TO BE THE LARGEST REGION, WITH A MARKET SIZE OF US\$31.2BN AND 43 MILLION MEMBERS OF 48,000 CLUBS"

range, says Rasmus Ingerslev, CEO of Fresh Fitness in Denmark. "This will challenge operators in all segments and force them look at what is actually perceived as valuable by their members, how they can reduce costs, and how they can incorporate services that do not add significant cost, such as virtual group exercise," he explains.

Asia-Pacific

Asia-Pacific is home to several global market leaders. Asia generates roughly US\$11.2bn in annual revenue from more than 18,000 clubs and 13.5 million members. Meanwhile, with over 3,000 clubs, Australia and New Zealand collectively generate US\$2.3bn in revenue from 3.1 million members.

While Australia's health club industry has remained steady over the past few years, the landscape of the market has been dynamic. Alongside full-service chains, the personal training studios, outdoor fitness, franchises and 24-hour facilities claim significant market share. The use of technology in the Australian market plays a key role in enhancing member experience and member retention.

Although China is a leading global market, the potential for growth in the fitness sector remains. With approximately 3.4 million members,

China's market penetration rate is currently low. Nonetheless, the fitness market is competitive, with some expecting the smaller commercial club companies to be replaced by small community gyms and large commercial fitness centres.

The full effects of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan have yet to be seen.

Summary

Only time will tell what lasting impact the slowly dwindling financial crisis will have on European markets. However, strong key performance indicators in the Americas and opportunities in the Asia-Pacific leave room for future growth.

OBTAIN YOUR COPY

The 2012 IHRSA Global Report: The State of the Health Club Industry is available in both print and PDF format to IHRSA members (US\$49.95) and non-members (US\$99.95). Please visit: www.ihrsa.org/2012-ihrsa-global-report

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A new life after work

David Stalker reports on how the FIA has teamed up with social design agency thinkpublic, to develop an ambitious project to help male retirees stay socially and physically active

Health Club Management is the
FIA's Public Affairs Media Partner



Did you know that one in five older people admit they cannot remember the last time they did any exercise? Yet older people who are physically active benefit not only in health terms, but also socially.

Reduced physical activity levels and social interaction can often begin in retirement, particularly for older men, many of whom are left feeling isolated and lonely when they finish work.

With this in mind, the FIA and design agency thinkpublic have spent the last six months successfully piloting an online platform to improve the quality of life and health of men entering retirement. With the help of physical activity providers, we are now ready to expand the concept.

The After Work Club

The After Work Club website is created by men for men, to start new connections



John Searle: Offering inspiration to others

and discussions about retirement. It includes inspirational stories, an events diary to meet and connect with others, and the opportunity to build friendships and share experiences.

Over six months, we have talked to over 350 people about how they feel about the idea of retirement, what it means for them and some of the challenges they face at this time in their lives. What we heard was that the concept of retirement is outdated. Lives are longer and the idea of pottering about for a few years is no longer relevant. For modern men, this is a time of opportunity, a new start, a time to fulfil lifetime ambitions, re-train, take up something new, live life for yourself.

During the trial period, engagement events organised through The After Work Club gained positive feedback. "The After Work Club is brilliant because the key when it comes to helping people, especially men, is actually hearing stories of what others have done," commented one user.

OFFERING INSPIRATION

Examples of male retirees who have found a new lease of life after work, many in the physical activity sector, are inspiring After Work Club participants:

Doctor turns personal trainer: John Searle

John Searle retired from his role as a consultant anaesthetist in 1999, when he became unable to perform the technical aspects of the role after he developed rheumatoid arthritis. He has since taken up a new vocation and has been working as a personal trainer since 2005. "I have effectively had a second career when I thought I had been relegated to a not very active retirement. It has been hugely rewarding," he says.

From architect to Nordic Walking: Duncan Barratt

Duncan Barratt is currently an avid Nordic Walking UK instructor and advocate of the benefits of physical activity. He retired in 2008 following a career as an architect. At 69 years of age, he has been proactive in his retirement, taking up a new vocation and transforming his own health and fitness.

On average, Barratt spends four to six hours a week Nordic Walking, and a further 12–18 hours a week doing additional activities. Not only that, but every day he gets to see others taking steps towards becoming fitter. "I'm going to expand my programme of regular weekly Nordic walks and courses and motivate men – particularly those aged over 60 – to get fit," he says.

National rollout

Further growth of The After Work Club requires support from physical activity providers. We are now looking for organisations to step forward and deliver case events or sessions around physical activity, to support this transition from being busy at work to having lots of spare time. These will be showcased on The After Work Club website and could generate additional members in a demographic not yet maximised within your club or facility.

The After Work Club aims to scale nationwide and will inspire, connect and empower men during the transition period away from full-time work and into the next phase of their lives.

To find out more about The After Work Club or to list your events or activities, please visit www.theafterworkclub.co.uk or contact Karen Prothero on +44 (0)20 7420 8565 / karen@fia.org.uk

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DIARY

worldwide event listings for leisure professionals

JULY

19-24 | ICSEMIS 2012

Venue SECC, Glasgow, UK

Summary

The first ICSEMIS (International Convention on Science, Education and Medicine in Sport) was held in China in 2008, just prior to the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games. The title of this year's conference, being held in the UK around the London Olympics, is 'Sport... Inspiring a Learning Legacy'. The BASES Conference 2012 will be integrated into ICSEMIS 2012.

Web www.icsemis2012.com

AUGUST

2-5 | DCAC Washington

Venue: Washington DC, US

Summary

DCAC's goal for its fitness conventions is to 're-ignite your passion for fitness'. It strives to offer the highest quality fitness education sessions and certifications taught by some of the world's leading fitness experts.

Web www.dcacfitness.com

30-1 September | Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show

Venue São Paulo, Brazil

Summary

The premier conference and trade show in Latin America, with commentary on trends shaping the local fitness industry.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

SEPTEMBER

13-16 | SIBEC North America

Venue The Ritz-Carlton Orlando Grande Lakes, Florida, US

Summary

A one-to-one meeting forum for leading owners, operators, CEOs and COOs of health, recreation, sports and fitness organisations to meet face-to-face with executives from key supplier companies.

Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

18-20 | Leisure Industry Week

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

The UK's largest and most influential exhibition for the leisure industry, catering for all sectors of out-of-home leisure and attracting thousands of leisure professionals. The show spans a



The UK's Leisure Industry Week takes place from 18-20 September

range of zones, each offering insight into the latest trends and innovations. Last year's event also saw the launch of a new Education Village, hosting seminars and the IOU independent operators' forum. The members' choice Health Club Awards take place alongside LIW, with a gala dinner and awards ceremony on the Tuesday evening.

Web www.liw.co.uk

19-21 | Health+Fitness Business Expo and the Interbike Expo

Venue: Sands Expo & Convention Center, Las Vegas, US

Summary

Running the Health+Fitness Business Expo and the Interbike International Bicycle Expo in adjacent rooms gives attendees an opportunity to interact with suppliers from both segments of the fitness industry. Health+Fitness Business also features seminar sessions. Meanwhile, the Outdoor Demo event takes place in Boulder City, Nevada, on 17-18 September.

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com

26-28 | European Fitness Summit (EFS)

Venue Hotel Skipper, Barcelona, Spain

Summary

EFS offers suppliers from the fitness, wellness and health sectors an opportunity to meet decision-makers from leading fitness studios and wellness centres from selected European markets, in a series of face-to-face meetings.

Web www.european-fitness-summit.comThe *future* of fitness...

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everyone's talking about . . .

GP referrals

The fitness industry is well aware of the huge benefits of activity for both physical and mental health, but how can we get the medical sector to better embrace exercise referrals?

The fitness sector is chomping at the bit to get people active and improve their health via exercise referral schemes. So how can we encourage GPs to start referring more widely?

The link between lack of exercise and conditions such as heart disease and cancer are widely reported. Meanwhile, an inactive person spends 38 per cent more days in hospital over the course of their life than an active person, and it's estimated that 20 per cent of the UK population are accounting for 70 per cent of the NHS bill. The fitness industry can help – but how can we persuade the medical sector of this?

Nuffield Health's Dr Sarah Dauncey says an ideal scenario would be to give GPs a budget for referral schemes, drawn from the subsequent NHS savings exercise could deliver in reduced hospital appointments, acute admissions and A&E visits. Perfect though it would be, such a scenario is a long way off and there is a lot of groundwork to do first.

Meanwhile, the lack of knowledge about exercise referral schemes when I called my local surgery and PCT press office suggest they remain low priority. Exercise is also, it seems, seen as a hard sell to chronically inactive people. Drugs often offer the 'quick fix' approach that people often want.

At the recent TEDMED conference in Washington DC it was mooted that people who live a long time, but who need medical intervention, are good for business for the pharmaceutical industry and parts of the medical sector. I'm sure there are many GPs who would vociferously disagree with this, but the fitness industry must seek them out.

So what can we do? Meet with GPs personally and build a relationship? Lobby government for financial incentives for GPs who make referrals, as is already the case with referrals to smoking cessation schemes? Place fitness professionals in GP surgeries to talk direct to patients? We ask the experts...

HOW CAN GPs BE ENCOURAGED TO REFER? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

dr sarah dauncey

nuffield health • medical director



"I think there are two main barriers to GPs referring people for exercise: firstly, they have concerns about quality assurance and the level of expertise at health clubs; and secondly, there's a general lack of understanding of exercise as a clinical management tool.

At Nuffield Health, we're trying to overcome this by upskilling our in-house staff, driving higher levels of clinical understanding of health and wellbeing within our clubs, and by working with GPs at a local level to build relations and improve general understanding of exercise in the management of long-term chronic conditions.

Offering memberships and giving GPs the opportunity to experience an exercise prescription might help, giving them more insight into what fitness professionals offer to help individuals use exercise as a clinical tool. Inviting them to educational evenings at fitness centres, to discuss the management of certain conditions, would help their understanding as well.

But measurable health outcomes are the best way of persuading GPs: most are open to change if shown evidence. The fitness industry needs to keep working on records to prove that exercise can work as a clinical and preventative management tool."

cath mcguinness

middleway surgery • gp



"As a keen sportswoman, I do understand the benefits of exercise, but it's hard to convey that to someone who comes to you in their late 40s, having done no exercise since school and now overweight and suffering from health problems.

My surgery is in one of the most deprived areas of Cornwall, with poor diet and nutrition, low levels of exercise and high levels of ill health and obesity. My patients often look at me blankly when I suggest exercise. However, colleagues working in middle-class areas report more interest in exercise referrals.

Going to a gym is a step too far for many of my patients: the cost, transport and childcare are all obstacles. If these could be reduced, it might improve the interest in exercise referral schemes. I encourage my patients to exercise, but have to have a low starting point – I suggest simple power walks to get a bit puffed or breathless, or enlisting a friend to go to a class together.

Improved communication with the fitness industry would also help with the referral process, as we don't always know if schemes are still running. A central number to call for information would be beneficial."



"Measurable outcomes are the best way of persuading GPs: most are open to change if shown evidence"

fred turok

fia • chair



"GP's are still somewhat cynical about the proven medical benefits of exercise in the treatment and prevention of disease – they haven't had the necessary evidence to ensure they see exercise as one of their key tools.

The FIA is working to change this view. The Joint Consultative Forum – a partnership between the FIA and Royal

Medical Colleges – is drawing up standards to give clear and accredited guidelines for exercise programming, as well as UK standards for using exercise to manage chronic disease.

I believe every surgery should have an in-house exercise professional as standard, like the practice nurse. These exercise champions could work with the GP to identify those who could benefit from exercise and draw up a 12-month wellbeing programme, taking a holistic approach to their health: exercise, diet, stress, alcohol and whether or not they smoke.

As a sector, we need to be better at reaching out to our busy local GPs. Go and visit your local GP surgery – not as a patient, but to form a relationship. Even offer the GPs a free membership, so they can experience first-hand the effectiveness of an exercise programme."

georgina jupp

ck academy • managing director



"My experience suggests that, to get GPs onboard with exercise referrals, we need to make them simple, with clear information and obvious professional expertise and pathways to deal with patients.

The main barriers to referral remain a lack of understanding around the value of exercise, ongoing reluctance to engage with the fitness sector and – given time constraints of appointment slots – the effort required to explain the benefits to patients. To overcome this, we must have a consistent approach to medical conditions, quality programming, and ongoing collection and evaluation of data which should be shared with the referring GPs in a timely and consistent fashion.

I believe the FIA's inroads into disseminating evidence-based information around exercise referral programmes and forging strong links with medical bodies will, over time, decrease GPs' resistance. But actually removing these barriers will inevitably take longer. We must continue with our awareness-raising initiatives, learn from and support each other to be taken seriously as a sector, and continue to believe in our role in preventative healthcare."

DAVID LONG

US gym franchise Orangetheory Fitness combines group exercise with high-intensity interval training to deliver personal training-type results at a quarter of the price – and it's not only Stateside that this 'perfect workout' is winning fans. The co-founder and CEO talks to Rhianon Howells about his vision for a small studio brand with big horizons

When David Long and Jerome Kern signed up for the Ultimate Workout class at Ellen Latham's group exercise studio in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, three years ago – just round the corner from the franchise development company they co-owned – they weren't merely looking to break a sweat.

"We'd been searching all over the country for different fitness concepts to develop when we happened to cross paths with Ellen," explains Long. "She'd started working on the Ultimate Workout concept a few years previously and we really believed this was a workout that could give people great results. So we started taking the class and building our relationship with Ellen."

"With our business development experience, and her fitness and programming background, we felt we could build a small studio model that would provide a great product for consumers."

Fast-forward three years and, despite charging significantly higher rates than many traditional health clubs, the Orangetheory Fitness gym franchise – based on Latham's Ultimate Workout – has 19 sites across the US with 16 more in



David Long: CEO



Ellen Latham: CFO



Jerome Kern: president

the pipeline, is on the verge of a Canadian rollout and is attracting interest from South America, Australia and the UK. So what's the secret of the brand's success? And how does a premium product flourish in these budget-conscious times?

GETTING RESULTS

Long has always been passionate about fitness. After graduating from Florida University with a degree in physical therapy and an MBA, he started his career working in sales and operations for traditional health clubs. He then moved into management roles, first

with health and nutrition retailer GNC, and later with hugely successful budget spa chain Massage Envy. It was with the latter, as vice president of operations, that he cut his franchise teeth, helping to take the concept from 20 to around 550 locations in just four years.

In 2007, he and Kern – a regional developer for Massage Envy – decided to strike out on their own, setting up their own company, the Ascente Group, to identify and develop new franchise concepts. While continuing to work with Massage Envy on a consultancy basis, they soon found the opportunity



Clubs are equipped with FreeMotion treadmills and WaterRowers



Workouts offer personal attention at a fraction of the cost of PT

they were looking for in a small, family-run health and beauty concept called the European Wax Center. Together, they grew the enterprise from five to 200 locations, and sold out the entire US for area development.

It was in the wake of this success, in 2009, that Long and Kern were looking for a fitness concept on which to work their franchising magic. And in Ellen Latham's Ultimate Workout – a high-intensity interval training class combining cardiovascular and strength training – they were convinced they'd found it.

"We wanted something that was based on people actually getting results, and this workout was very results-driven, more akin to personal training," explains Long. "We saw that, while personal training was very popular in the US, it was also very expensive – whereas with this product, people could get still professional assistance from a skilled trainer, but at a much lower cost.

"Another factor was that the group setting provided a lot of energy – unlike one-on-one training, which is more low-key – and a lot of people thrive on that. So they were paying less than personal training to get the same results, but actually enjoying it more."

THE PERFECT WORKOUT

Together with Latham, Long and Kern founded the Ultimate Fitness Group to manage what would become the Orangetheory Fitness brand. At a pilot site in Ft. Lauderdale, opened in 2010, they created a small studio space with 12 treadmills, 12 rowing machines, 12 suspension units and free weights and benches for up to 24 people, plus a reception, showers and locker rooms.

Taking Latham's Ultimate Workout as their starting point, they then developed



Latham (right) oversees the heart rate of members during a workout

and refined the concept in preparation for a national rollout.

The hour-long workout is rooted in tried-and-tested principles of high-intensity interval training (see also p40) – in particular, the theory of excess post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC). This says that, if you can achieve at least 80 per cent of your maximum heart rate for 12–20 minutes, you will not only burn a higher number of calories during your workout, but your body will automatically kick in to a higher metabolic rate, meaning it will consume more oxygen, and therefore burn more calories, for 24–36 hours afterwards. To this, the partners have added both systems and science.

"We put in a lot more detailed training systems, so we could make sure incoming trainers were delivering the product in exactly the right way," says Long. "We also added a heart rate monitoring system, Cardio GX by Polar, which allows us to monitor our clients' heart rates and make sure they're getting into the proper zone. This is good for safety, as it makes sure people aren't over-exerting themselves, and at the same time it enables them to be very efficient, helping them get the best possible results from the time they spend working out."

Although other clubs may offer high-intensity interval training, argues Long, it is this very tailored, science-based approach that makes Orangetheory's

ABOUT THE ULTIMATE FITNESS GROUP

Orangetheory Fitness is a branded franchise model owned by the Ultimate Fitness Group, a company set up in 2009 by David Long (CEO), Jerome Kern (president) and Ellen Latham (chief fitness officer).

The company has recently taken on a fourth partner, David Hardy – president of private investment firm Franvest Capital Partners – to roll out the concept in Canada.

Long and Kern are also managing partners of the Ascentre Group, a franchise consulting and development company they set up in 2007. The Ascentre Group's clients include Massage Envy, the European Wax Center and the Ultimate Fitness Group.

offering unique. "We've gone into a lot of depth to put together a perfect workout," he says.

Orangetheory Fitness studios typically offer between eight and 10 group sessions a day, with most members signing up for between two and four slots a week. Membership options range from monthly plans to pre-paid packages of 10, 20 or 30 sessions, all of which are offered on a no-contract basis. "We don't want to use a contract to make the client feel like they have to stay," says Long. "We want ▶



- people to come back to us because of the results and the service we provide.”

Although the company's monthly charges are significantly higher than those of many traditional clubs (see information box, right), Long is quick to point out that they are much lower than those for personal training, against which the product and the results it delivers are more directly comparable. “What we're working to deliver is that personal training experience that people pay US\$50–US\$100 an hour for, but at a quarter of the cost,” he says.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

When it came to rolling out the franchise concept, Long and Kern were able to draw on their extensive experience with both Massage Envy and European Wax Center: “One of the key things we've learned is that the selection of the right franchise owner is critical,” says Long, adding that the company currently has 25 franchisees on its books. “Franchising provides all the systems and tools for success, but with Orangetheory we wanted people who believed in the product, who believed in fitness and who were ready to be fairly hands-on. We believe this is a hands-on business and owners need to be involved.

“We also put a lot of effort into helping franchisees pick the absolute best location. We target larger anchors, such as shopping centres, and we look for a combination of visibility and walk-by traffic. We love it when people can see the signage from the road. We've

ORANGETHEORY FITNESS BY NUMBERS

- There are currently 11,000 Orangetheory Fitness members across 19 US sites
- The brand has a further 16 US sites and three Canadian sites in development
- The target for each site is 500 members
- A basic pre-paid package of 10 sessions costs US\$180 (US\$18 per session)
- The most popular monthly membership package – the Elite Package – costs US\$99 for eight sessions a month (just under US\$12.50 per session)

also designed the look of the brand to encourage people to stop by and look in. We're confident that, if we can get people to come in and try the workout, we have a good chance of them becoming clients.”

In terms of who the brand appeals to, whenever a new Orangetheory Fitness site opens, the gender split of members tends to be 75 per cent female to 25 per cent male, says Long – but once the site has been open a few months, this usually corrects to a more even ratio. “We have different theories around why that happens, such as women being more comfortable taking group classes, but once the location is open and we're able to spread the

word about what we really do, we soon start to get more men.”

Long is also keen to point out that, while the largest segment of Orangetheory members are in their mid-20s to mid-50s, the brand also attracts a significant proportion of people in their 60s and 70s. The reason for this is that, despite its basis in high-intensity interval training (historically more appealing to young, athletic men) the Orangetheory workout – with its integral heart rate monitoring system – is designed to be safe and effective for people of all ability levels, not just the already-fit. “Our goal is to make this a product for everyone,” says Long. “It doesn't matter how old or unfit our members are – we educate them to go at their own pace regardless, and our trainers will help them to find exercises that are in-tune with their bodies.”

Far from neglecting the out-of-shape market, Orangetheory actively goes after it, with reward-based weight-loss challenges a key component of every new opening campaign. “We want to attract people who aren't fit at all, who need to lose maybe 30–50lbs,” says Long. “And these people really get amazing results with us. They have a longer way to go to get fit, but they quickly get in their stride and feel comfortable with the programme.”

In fact, according to Long, as many as half of new members signing up to Orangetheory have weight-loss goals of 10lbs or more – unsurprising, perhaps, given the company's claims that, as long as they also stick to a healthy diet, men



The group setting 'provides a lot of energy,' says Long

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and we have a whole sequence of tests to find the right individuals."

All Orangetheory trainers are employed on contract to teach up to 12–15 sessions a week, and with head trainer and regional trainer positions also available within the group there are good opportunities for progression, says Long.

AGGRESSIVE EXPANSION

Since the first Orangetheory Fitness opened in Ft. Lauderdale in 2010, Long and his partners have grown the brand slowly and steadily across five US states – Florida, Arizona, Colorado, Minnesota and New York. Looking ahead, the company's rollout plans are about to get much more ambitious. "The first two years have really been focused on getting the model right," says Long. "Going into 2013, we're going to get a lot more aggressive with expansion."

Over the next five years, Long hopes to see 500 locations across the US, and a recently announced partnership with Canadian private investment firm Franvest Capital Partners means a similar rollout north of the border may also be on the cards. Under the agreement, David Hardy, president of Franvest, has become a fourth partner in the Ultimate Fitness Group and the first three Canadian sites are set to open this year. What's more, Canada is only the tip of Orangetheory's global expansion potential. "We actually have more interest internationally than we do in the US. We're currently looking at opportunities in South America, Australia and the UK," says Long.

Even with the dark clouds of another US recession looming, Long believes the demand for specialised, boutique fitness services such as those offered by Orangetheory Fitness is only going to increase. "People are looking for more service and more value, and for the majority of people who aren't self-sufficient in fitness, small group training studios can deliver the information and motivation they need," he says. "I think that's going to be a very strong movement for the next five to 10 years."

 **rhianon howells**
healthclub@leisuremedia.com

- can lose up to 10lbs a week and women up to 5lbs a week on the workout. Building on this, Orangetheory is now trialling food coaching concepts at three of its sites, with a view to rolling out a full weight-loss programme in 2013.

At the same time, the company is careful not to neglect its fitter clients – nor to lose sight of the fact that even those who start out focused on weight loss need new incentives once they meet their goals. To this end, every site also offers a wide variety of fitness- and performance-related challenges to keep people interested.

PERSONAL SERVICE

While getting clients through the door is one thing, persuading them to come back is quite another. Given the company's no-contract policy, Long acknowledges that, when it comes to turning prospects into regulars, the first few weeks are crucial.

"A lot of it's about trying to get clients started on the right foot," he says. "What we know is that they need to get into a routine, so we work on putting their schedule together and getting their sessions booked up for the first month, and after that we follow up with emails and phone calls to keep them booking and attending on a regular basis."

If a client stops coming for a while, or shows any signs of having problems with the workout, the head trainer will make a point of setting up a meeting with that person either before or after class to discuss their concerns. "What we don't want is to have people feeling lost and falling through the cracks," says Long. "We put a lot of effort into making sure people feel comfortable with the workout before they end up cancelling."

According to Long, this level of interest in individual clients is made possible by the small studio model. "Because our trainers are not dealing with thousands of clients, there's a much stronger sense of community and a much stronger bond between the trainer and the client than in a big health club, where no-one really knows anyone," he says.

Orangetheory's emphasis on delivering both tangible results and personal attention inevitably means recruitment standards are high. "We're looking for trainers with an in-depth understanding of physiology and proper exercise form," says Long. "We can provide detailed training on our exact product, but they need to come in with that knowledge and experience. They also have to be comfortable both leading a group and giving one-on-one attention,



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HOME FROM HOME

KATE CRACKNELL PAYS A
VISIT TO AL CORNICHE
CLUB RESORT AND SPA
IN KUWAIT CITY

Al Corniche Club Resort and Spa, located on the seafloor on the edge of Kuwait City, "doesn't feel like Kuwait," according to spa director Maria Davydova. "English is the language spoken at the club and we have a big mix of nationalities. We don't really offer traditional Arabic services, and our local members are very modern in their outlook," she explains.

"There are two Kuwaits," adds Patrick Taffin d'Heursel, Six Senses Spa director at the new Hotel Missoni in Kuwait City, which I also visited on my trip. "There's the more traditional Kuwait, typified by the burqa, and then there's the Kuwait that goes to spas. The difference in mindset is

hard to attribute to any one thing, but as a general rule those who use our services tend to be more widely travelled."

This international perspective has led to high expectations. Taffin d'Heursel explains: "Kuwaitis have money, but they don't just spend it without thinking. They've experienced high standards around the world so, while they're happy to spend, they will only do so if they feel they're getting value and good service."

Around 92 per cent of Kuwaitis work for the government, earning "at least KD800 [around £2,000] a month" according to Gerard Oliver, general manager of Al Corniche. Those who work in the private sector, on lower salaries, are compensated by the government. As

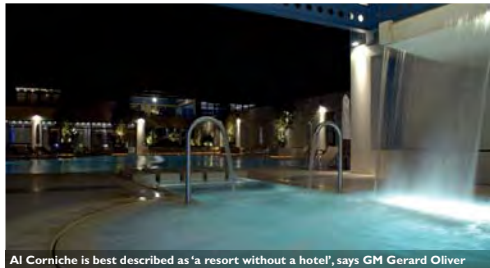
a result, immigrant maids and nannies are commonplace – from a total population of 3.8 million, one million are Kuwaiti, with the remainder a combination of western expats and immigrants from countries across the Gulf region and beyond. Nannies tend to accompany families on days out, so parents can enjoy 'me time'.

And with working hours also relatively short, Kuwaitis have both the time and the disposable income to generate a high demand for good quality leisure. Taffin d'Heursel believes there's a growing focus on wellness within this leisure time: "I see a lot of Kuwaitis now concerned about their health, obesity, eating properly, taking care of themselves. Of course everyone wants a quick fix, but they are learning that you have to change your lifestyle to be able to maintain any benefits."

Nevertheless, with social life revolving heavily around food, and with spa-based relaxation a significantly more popular option than the gym – plastic surgery remains a popular fall-back – health statistics are concerning: 28.8 per cent of adults in Kuwait are obese and 14.4 per cent have diabetes. If this is expanded to include overweight as well as obese people, the figure rises to 74 per cent of the population – the worst in the Middle East, and among the worst in the world.

whizz tour

While Kuwaitis travel internationally, Kuwait itself is not on the tourist map –



Al Corniche is best described as 'a resort without a hotel', says GM Gerard Oliver



Country club approach: Facilities at Al Corniche include an outdoor pool, a private beach and extensive spa facilities

a fact Oliver attributes to its dry status; the British Embassy is the only place in the city that is allowed to serve alcohol.

Al Corniche Club Resort and Spa therefore caters for a combination of expats and high-earning locals and can best be described as, in Oliver's words, "a resort without a hotel". He explains: "We wanted to create something totally different in the market – somewhere people could come to relax. The quality offering we've developed at Al Corniche is highly regarded across the Middle East."

The overall impression is one of a country club, with a wide array of offerings (see info panel 1, p38) to cater for guests who might stay the whole day. Entering the club, you're immediately

greeted by name at the main reception, set within a large marbled space. Off to the right lies the spa, with a separate entrance affording it an exclusive feel. Directly ahead lies the restaurant area and a separate snack bar; while a flight of stairs takes you up to a large, mixed-sex gym with views out to sea. There's also a circuit training area, a huge studio with even more stunning sea views, and a separate, smaller mind-body studio.

Meanwhile, back on the ground floor, the outdoor pool lies shimmering in the sunshine just beyond the restaurant. Down a few steps and you access a private beach, day-use beachfront cabanas, and additional studios – a cave-like group cycling room with 40 bikes, personal training studio, and

an area used for kids' fitness. There are also tennis and squash courts.

Membership – which includes everything except spa – costs KD1,000 for a couple, KD750 for a single male, and KD650 for a single female (plus a KD150 joining fee).

fitness facilities

"No one aspect of our offering has priority over the other," explains Oliver. "Around two-thirds of members use the spa, for example, while less than half use the gym."

Nevertheless, the quality of Al Corniche's fitness trainers is, he says, something for which the club is held in high regard. This includes kids' exercise professionals, offering specialist classes as well as PT and nutrition/weight loss programmes for ▶



Facilities in the mixed-sex gym include a large group exercise studio overlooking the sea

children. "Parents are aware that their kids are overweight," says Oliver.

The 80-station gym and large group cycling studio are currently being refurbished, including new kit from Pulse, plus Octane cross-trainers and Expona clic flooring. MYZONE was installed in March, with screens in all studios.

The studios have received new equipment from Escape Fitness, including a full complement of SAQ gear along with new mats, balls, bands and so on for pilates and yoga. Meanwhile, the PT studio has been kitted out with a range

of boxing equipment: bags, gloves, pads and body protectors. New group exercise programming has also been introduced to complement the Les Mills offering, including a wider range of mind-body classes and military bootcamp sessions on the beach.

"CapEx remains quite high in Kuwait, in contrast to Europe where costs are being cut by getting rid of staff and so on," says Oliver. "However, the decision about our gym equipment was all down to maintenance. Parts always have to be ordered from abroad, but we wanted more control – buying spare parts direct,

with our own maintenance team trained by our suppliers to undertake repairs."

Going forward, objectives for the fitness offering include increasing income from group courses – football for kids, weight loss and TRX, for example. "But the biggest challenge on the fitness side is keeping hold of staff," says Oliver. "We have spa therapists who've been with us for years. But with fitness instructors it's harder as they tend to be young and single; Kuwait doesn't offer much to interest them socially.

"Communication can also be an issue: we have 150 staff spanning 22 nationalities."

INFO PANEL 1: ABOUT AL CORNICHE

Al Corniche Club Resort and Spa, located on the seafloor in Kuwait, is a large, members-only country club-style offering.

Facilities include a large 80-station gym overlooking the sea, numerous group exercise and personal training studios, an outdoor pool, a private beach with beachfront cabanas for day use, tennis and squash courts, a wide array of kids' activities (including 45 timetable classes a week, alongside kids' personal training and nutrition), several restaurants and a Toni & Guy hair salon.

There's also a 1,858sq m (20,000sq ft) spa, where the treatment rooms only are also open to non-members.

Designed by award-winning architect Jean-Paul Blissett and opened in 2005, the club is owned by Tameer, which in turn is part-owned by real estate

company Al Massaleh. It was built at a cost of KD8m (approx. £20m) in a BOT project – "build, operate and transfer". Under these terms, the land does not belong to the club but to the government; Al Corniche pays rent on the land and will ultimately have to hand it back. It currently has the right to operate the club until the end of 2018, but will apply for another five years.

There are at present 3,400 members – 55 per cent women and 45 per cent men – all acquired via word-of-mouth; the club has never advertised. Gross operating profit is over KD11m a year, with only 55 per cent of this coming from membership. GM Gerard Oliver explains: "Food & beverage can take £70–80k a month – particularly impressive given that there is no alcohol in Kuwait – while the spa takes anything from £40–60k."

spa offering

On entering the spa, the ground floor offers a particularly exclusive feel, comprising as it does the male and female Premier areas. On each side is a lounge, changing area, indoor pool and thermal suite. The female area also offers a small single-sex gym, while the male area has recently had its thermal suite overhauled by Schletterer. This floor is open to 1,000 Premier members only (KD1,000 a year for a single male, KD850 single female or KD1,300 for a couple – plus joining fees).

Upstairs are the treatment rooms: 11 on the female side, plus sauna and steamroom; and seven on the male side, again plus sauna and steamroom. A large hydro pool area and LPG treatment room can be used by either men or women. All facilities on this floor are for pre-booked, private use only and are open to members and non-members – although 80 per cent of the spa's business currently comes from members.

When Al Corniche first opened, Premier Founder members received free



All spa facilities, including the large hydropool area, are for pre-booked, private use only



Cabanas can be rented for day use

“OUR MEMBERSHIP WENT OVER CAPACITY RECENTLY. WE’RE AIMING TO LOWER IT, BUT ARE PUTTING UP FEES TO MAINTAIN INCOME”

treatments for life, and all members still receive one complimentary spa treatment on joining. They then receive ongoing discounts in the spa, with many regularly incorporating spa into their visits.

“Women will come in and leave their kids in the crèche while they go to the spa, while on a summer weekend we can easily have 1,500 members visiting us in one day and staying all day,” explains Oliver.

Davydova agrees: “Women, especially Premier members, come to the spa for the social aspect – they chat, have tea... It’s common for guests to book multiple

treatments, and while the average stay in the spa is two hours, we have some members who come all day, every day. They tell us they feel Al Corniche is their home.”

She continues: “Our main concern is certainly to keep members happy – ultimately the whole of Al Corniche is one big profit centre – but at the end of the day we’re still a business, and the spa is a great way to introduce people to the club. We’re doing a marketing campaign now to promote the spa to non-members, and we hope to get their share of the business up to 40 per cent.”

But, adds Oliver: “The focus for non-member usage will be during the week, when we’re currently at around 50–60 per cent capacity. During our busy weekends, we aim to reach 100 per cent spa occupancy with members only.”

looking forward

So can a club like Al Corniche become too popular? “Our aim is to be consistent, not too successful,” says Oliver. “We never advertise – all our

members are gained by word-of-mouth. But our membership went over capacity recently: with the unrest in the region, a lot of Lebanese and Egyptians for example stayed in Kuwait, while locals also stopped travelling. We went up to 3,800 members, which was too many. We currently have just over 3,400 members and we’re aiming to lower that to 3,200 or 3,300. However, we’ll be putting fees up to maintain the same income – it’s all about increasing yield. We’ve stopped all corporate rates and have increased our family focus. We’re being very honest and open about this.

“Al Corniche is the only exclusive family club in Kuwait. We’ll be defining our positioning even more clearly along those lines going forward – the family market is huge here, with very little on offer. Everything we do will be designed around how a family can get the most from our club, with a strong focus on kids’ activities.”

 **kate cracknell**
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Keiser's XPress circuit was created with time-conscious, non-elite members in mind

Ramping it up

There's been a surge in interest in high-intensity interval training (HIT) among the health and fitness sector recently. In the first of a two-part series, Kate Cracknell investigates the background and benefits of this training protocol

In the last few years, we've seen the emergence of a number of shorter, results-driven workout concepts, all designed specifically with today's 'time poor' member in mind. Women-only franchises Curves and Vivafit have for some time offered a 30-minute, circuit-based workout, but they are now being joined in this area by the likes of Fit n Fast in Australia, where 'Quickie' workouts are available in activities such as cycling, boxing and circuits – and

where the intensity is being ramped up to challenge a younger demographic than the typical Curves member.

From a supplier perspective, milon's award-winning concept – with eccentric as well as concentric resistance – has been designed to maximise results via a circuit-based workout that takes just a little over 30 minutes. Power Plate also showcased a 20-minute concept at LIVV 2011 and FIBO 2012, combining its vibration training platform with its new

powerBIKE. As Steve Barrett, programme developer and presenter, summarises: "Classes are getting shorter."

AN ELITE HERITAGE

They're also getting tougher. Because what this is all increasingly coming down to is the emergence of HIT (high-intensity interval training). Or should we say re-emergence? After all, in essence HIT is a training method that's been around for many years in the elite sports arena.


Interval training in its modern form dates back to the 1930s, when the likes of Woldemar Gerschler (Germany) and Gosta Holmer (Sweden) used it to enhance the performance of their national teams. And in Finland, Lauri Pihlala was creating interval training programmes for runner Paavo Nurmi as far back as 1910.

Holmer dubbed the approach 'fartlek' – Swedish for 'speed play' – thanks to the use of 'faster than race' pace. Concentrating on simultaneous speed/endurance training, the training protocol puts stress on both aerobic and anaerobic energy systems due to the alternating pace and intensity of the exercise. It's now used the world over to offer variation in an elite athlete's preparation throughout the year.


INFO PANEL I : Research papers

A 2005 study of 38 elite cyclists, published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, showed that interval training leads to improved respiratory function, including improved bloodflow through the lungs and an improved oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange. In the study, HIT improved performance by improving ventilatory threshold and VO_2 max, boosting the body's ability to take in and use oxygen to generate energy.


Another study, published in the *Journal of Physiology* in July 2006, found improved adaptations in muscle cells after interval training as compared to traditional steady-state endurance training. The study compared two groups of active young men over a two-week period. One group engaged in traditional long-duration training for 90–120 minutes, while the other did four to six sets of sprint intervals (30 seconds all-out followed by four-minute rest intervals). The study revealed superior adaptations in muscle tissue of the HIT group.



HIT principles are used by elite athletes the world over



In a study of elite cyclists, HIT led to improved respiratory function



HIT has been proven to help generate athletic, powerful muscle

“WE MUST ESTABLISH A COMMON VOCABULARY TO AVOID FANCY MARKETING NAMES FOR PROGRAMMES THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR 40 YEARS”

And now it's coming to our gyms in the form of HIT. So how do we define HIT?

DEFINING HIT

Len Kravitz, PhD and Lance Dalleck, MS – researchers at the University of New Mexico, US – define interval training as “high-intensity, short duration training sessions performed at workloads above the lactate threshold, marked by an abrupt increase in blood lactate that forces the muscle to revert from aerobic to anaerobic metabolism”.

Clearly this is hard to measure within a gym environment. However, in a review paper undertaken in February by New Zealand's AUT University (see info panel 2, p42), HIT is defined as either working at over 75 per cent of heart rate maximum (HR max) or 75 per cent of maximum oxygen uptake (VO_2 max), followed by rest periods.

Intervals vary from 1:1 (work:rest) ratios, to 2:1 or other variations depending on fitness levels. The rest phase can either be complete rest or dropping back to a moderate intensity to enable recovery.

“However, 75 per cent HR max and 75 per cent VO_2 max are very different intensities and not to be confused as being the same,” stresses Randy Huntington, global director of marketing, performance, education and research at Keiser. So no clear-cut guidelines there as yet, other than that the work phases should be ‘hard’ or ‘very hard’.

Huntington, meanwhile, categorises HIT as a form of circuit training. “In 1953, R E Morgan and G T Anderson at the University of Leeds created circuit training – of which interval training is a subset – with Manfred Scholich going on to write the bible on interval/circuit training in 1986,” he explains.

“There are many ways to do circuits and Scholich has already labelled them quite well, setting a series of criteria: sets, reps, load, type of exercise, order of exercises, number of exercises, rest interval, work interval and density.

“It's important that a common vocabulary be established within the fitness industry, otherwise we'll end up with fancy marketing names for programmes that have actually existed for over 40 years – and in some cases, where the roots are over 100 years old.”

BENEFITS OF HIT

But if precise terminology and parameters are still to be decided, there does seem to be broad agreement on the benefits of HIT.

“Research shows that HIT delivers results that surpass conventional, steady-state training,” says Bryce Hastings, technical consultant for Les Mills International. “These include accelerated aerobic conditioning, getting you fitter faster; an improved anaerobic threshold, letting you go harder for longer; improved insulin resistance and growth hormone changes, with enhanced hormonal responses; and the generation of athletic, powerful muscle, giving you ▶

INFO PANEL 2 : Literature review

AUT University's review of 45 published journal articles, carried out on behalf of Les Mills, focused on 24 papers that compared HIT with steady-state moderate intensity exercise. Although the studies covered groups as diverse as elite athletes and post-cardiac event patients, the authors focused on moderately trained recreational athletes through to those with general metabolic syndrome (including obesity and hypertension) as more representative of the general population. The training studies ranged from two to 20 weeks in duration, with training frequency typically three to five sessions a week.

Some studies used supra-maximal intensity (up to a reported 170 per cent of $\dot{V}O_2$ max). However, most used 'work' phases of around 90 per cent $\dot{V}O_2$ max – also described as 15–17 out of 20 on a self-rating scale of perceived exertion (hard to very hard). Sessions generally lasted around 40 minutes, including work and recovery phases: work phases lasted eight seconds to four minutes, but were typically 30 seconds to two minutes; recovery phases were mostly one to four minutes of light to moderate intensity exercise (around 70 per cent HR max).

In terms of results, in several studies HIT produced 5–10 per cent greater increases in $\dot{V}O_2$ max than moderate exercise, often in less total time. In some cases even greater differences were observed. Where the steady state group did experience significantly greater increases in $\dot{V}O_2$ max "it was patently owing to very big differences in training volume".



Work phases typically last between 30 seconds and two minutes

In all cases, HIT produced greater improvements in anaerobic fitness, insulin sensitivity, endothelial function and body fat levels, with significantly greater reductions also observed in systolic and diastolic pressure in several studies.

Although often anecdotally quoted as a benefit of HIT, only one study specifically examined EPOC (excess post-exercise oxygen consumption) and found no significant difference compared with steady-state moderate intensity exercise.

Several of the papers commented anecdotally that subjects typically reported their enjoyment of interval-style training more than steady-state training, leading to good adherence.

The authors of the review found no evidence that repeat high intensity exercise bouts had a harmful effect on any of the populations encountered within the studies. They also found no evidence that exercise intensity alone has a negative effect on resting hormone levels (testosterone, cortisol etc).



HIT: Perceived exertion levels of 15–17 out of 20

the shape and tone you dream about." (See info panel 1, p40, and info panel 2, above, for further details.)

Huntington adds: "Interval training has the potential to burn more calories than conventional aerobic/strength training and is an effective means of improving strength/muscular endurance. In addition, it has always delivered faster results. However, all this is at the potential expense of injury and endocrine burnout. It takes quite some time to adapt to such workouts, and in most cases adherence is less time than the required time to adaptation. If we are to bring it into the gym environment, we need to make it fun so people will continue to do it, thereby gaining a cumulative effect."

There is also an argument that, particularly for those seeking performance training, a HIT circuit may not deliver optimum results. Huntington continues: "In the late 80s and early 90s, Keiser developed the XPress Circuit to meet the needs of the time-conscious, non-elite member. This was done in the full knowledge that circuit training will always compromise the true effectiveness of the five S's – strength, speed, skill, stamina, suppleness – when they are not done as discreet parts of a programme. Does this make HIT or circuit training bad? Absolutely not. It just means that the best results you can get will be less than the best result you could achieve by focusing on any one of the five S's individually."

"TO BRING HIT TO THE GYM, WE NEED TO MAKE IT FUN SO PEOPLE CONTINUE TO DO IT, THEREBY GAINING A CUMULATIVE EFFECT"

A BROAD APPEAL

For non-elite athletes, however, the sort of benefits outlined earlier will already be very compelling. Not only that, but the AUT University/Les Mills review paper also highlights benefits for a far more diverse range of exercisers than might have been expected (see info panel 2, above). Gym-based use of HIT could, it seems, be of relatively broad appeal.

So how can the hi-tech science of HIT be translated into the gym environment? How do we create a programme that's suitable for a non-elite audience, ensuring it's safe for the average gym-going participant? We'll investigate ways to bring HIT to the gym in the second part of this series, which will appear in the August issue of *Health Club Management*.

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REAPING REWARDS



Odyssey runs a rolling
'refer a friend' campaign

REWARD SCHEMES ARE WELL ESTABLISHED IN THE FITNESS INDUSTRY AS A MEANS OF GETTING NEW MEMBERS, BUT HOW ABOUT USING THEM TO RETAIN EXISTING MEMBERS? KATH HUDSON REPORTS

I buy my petrol and do my weekly shop at Tesco, despite the fact that it's not the closest supermarket, that as a result I spend more money (not sure if that's down to the prices or the product range on offer) and that there's always a queue for petrol. Why? Because every so often I get a treat through the Clubcard scheme, not to mention vouchers for schools: next week we're going to Legoland and Pizza Express courtesy of Tesco, and the school playground is abuzz with people talking about half-term, Tesco-funded days out.

Tesco's vouchers have created a loyal customer out of me, so is the health club industry missing a trick by chiefly using its reward schemes as a way of attracting new members?

Geraldine Tuck at the D2F Group, which administers member reward schemes for 40 health club chains in the UK, says most of its clients want to

use the schemes to get new members – either by giving people a joining gift or by rewarding existing members for referring a friend. "It's easy to allocate a budget for this type of activity," she says. "Generally when we speak to operators about using reward schemes for retention, they're not interested. I think that's because it's harder to plot and budget."

For member acquisition campaigns, she adds, the club usually makes all the

money back on the first campaign, which makes it very appealing.

REFER A FRIEND

However, although primarily focused on new membership as an end goal, 'refer a friend' campaigns do also have some retentive qualities as a by-product: existing members are given a reward and, once they have a friend to exercise with, they might be more inclined to remain a member, try new things or exercise more often.

Knebworth-based health club Odyssey uses D2F to run a rolling 'refer a friend' campaign: if someone gets a friend to join, they receive a voucher to be redeemed via the D2F website. "That means we simply hand out a voucher and don't have loads of iPods or trainers to store," explains operations director Stephen Aucott. "Our budget for gifts is at least £25 – sometimes we use in-house services ▶

**"THE BEST RETENTION
SCHEMES REWARD
MEMBERS FOR
ACTIVITY – REACHING
A PRE-DETERMINED
GOAL, FOR EXAMPLE"**



If people have a friend to work out with, they tend to remain as members



Rewards can include classes...

PHOTOVIDEO THE SAME OBJECT / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

▶ like a PT session or a spa treatment; sometimes we use the D2F gifts.”
The scheme has been extremely successful for referrals, says Aucott, boosting them from 15 per cent to 30 per cent of monthly sales. “The member reward scheme also works for us from

a retention point of view, because if someone is exercising with a friend, they are more likely to stay,” he adds.

REWARDING ACTIVITY

The best retention schemes reward members for activity – reaching a

pre-determined goal, for example, or attending a certain number of classes – rather than simply swiping in just to have a coffee at the club. The Gym Miles scheme (see information box, left) is one such scheme, and it allows members to accrue points that can be converted into shopping vouchers for use on the high street.

According to EZ-Runner’s Shez Namooya, member reward schemes should also tie people in to be most effective: “Offering them a month free, for example, isn’t as effective as using the scheme as an opportunity to upsell other services such as personal training, exercise classes or a treatment. Member reward schemes can be a way of getting people to try out other services, without cheapening them by offering them up for free or heavily discounted.”

EZ-Runner is currently working with an operator to develop an innovative concept based around using a reward scheme as a retention tool. Adopting a gaming theme, members will have to do a certain number of activities to achieve a specified level – and once they reach that level, they access a raft of rewards. “It’s all about rewarding members for how active they are and the effort they put in,” says Namooya.

Although as Tuck says, budgeting for such a scheme can be more challenging, Namooya believes reward schemes can pay for themselves in as little as three months in terms of increased retention and upselling opportunities. From the outset, he recommends building in

REWARD SCHEMES

D2F

All D2F’s systems are bespoke, so the end user feels as though they are dealing with the gym operator directly. D2F takes a set-up fee, builds the website on-brand and using the club’s images, and sets up the campaign. It can run as many campaigns as the operator wants.

On receiving a voucher, members go to the website to choose how they would like to redeem it. Popular options include experience days, shopping vouchers, trainers, iPods and smoothie makers.

E-Z RUNNER

Off-the-shelf and bespoke systems are offered. Loyalty points can be earned based on attendance, purchasing certain items, booking into certain classes and being a regular good payer. Points can then be redeemed for goods or services.

Member information, such as aspirations or goals, can also be captured via the scheme. Members

can then be targeted with specific loyalty campaigns.

GYM MILES

When a gym signs up to the Gym Miles scheme, it provides all its members with a leisure card. Leisure card-holders participating in exercise can then earn points for being active. Activity levels are kept track of using the club management software system at the venue/s, or else cardholders can self-report home and outdoor exercise through the Gym Miles website.

Users collect points through exercise, with each point accrued worth 1 pence, which can be used at more than 250 national high street brands and supermarkets. Discounts and special offers are also offered to cardholders. An appealing part of this programme for the operator is that the administration charge – £1 per member, per month – is taken from the rewards account balance generated by the member, so there is no direct cost to the operator.



ANDRIEN / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



... or in-house spa treatments such as massages

targets and review points to make sure the scheme is performing as it should. Operators might do well to look at how much lapsed memberships cost their gyms – could there be an argument in favour of spending to save, offsetting these costs to fund a loyalty scheme?

ENGAGING THE CUSTOMER

The main benefits of reward schemes based on retention, according to Namooya, are that they add value to the offering and can engage the customer more deeply with the club: "If I can get my members to form a habit of attending my gym, they are less likely to leave," he says. However, in order to work most effectively, members must be rewarded in ways that they value, and research

**"WE KNOW OF AN
OPERATOR WHO
INTRODUCED A
LOYALTY SCHEME AND
SAW A 40 PER CENT
INCREASE IN
RETENTION RATES"**

must be done into the membership base to understand what constitutes a genuinely motivating reward.

Schemes should be trackable, keeping tabs on what members are doing to

earn the reward. This allows gyms to build up more data about the client, such as how often they come, how long they exercise and their favourite activities – excellent for target marketing and demographic profiling.

Loyalty schemes must also, of course, be cost-effective, but as Namooya concludes: "We know of an operator who introduced a loyalty scheme to a cross-section of its estate and saw a 40 per cent increase in retention rates. Considering each 1 per cent retained was worth nearly £1m, not only was the campaign effective, but there's clearly also significant justification for allocating budget to such schemes."

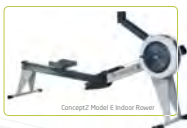
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PEAK PERFORMANCE



KATE CRACKNELL TALKS TO DAN ZIEKY, EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR FOR ATHLETES' PERFORMANCE, ABOUT THE COMPANY'S SEAMLESS APPROACH TO REHAB, PREHAB AND TRAINING

WHAT IS ATHLETES' PERFORMANCE?

Athletes' Performance (AP) was founded by Mark Verstegen, a former college football player who hoped to play in the NFL until he suffered an injury. He therefore had the idea of developing a facility where professional, elite athletes could come in their off-season to get the best in training, the best in rehab, the best in nutrition all under one roof.

Sometimes we'll be getting athletes back to fitness; other times we're helping prevent injury in the first place – some athletes come during the off-season just to have their off-season training. It's all about a sustainable, long-term approach to staying healthy and injury-free, and they come back to us year after year.

Whatever sport the athletes are involved in – whether that's football, baseball, soccer, boxing – they have access to the

best facilities and the best specialists, all seamlessly integrated to ethically enhance the athletes' performance. Nowadays this sort of seamless approach is more commonplace, with performance rehab and nutrition working together. But 10 years ago, nobody was doing this – Mark really was at the forefront of this trend.

The first AP facility opened in Arizona in 1999 and we now have four facilities: in Phoenix, Arizona; Gulf Breeze, Florida; Los Angeles; and Frisco, Texas. All are very consistent in terms of programming, training and philosophy.

WHAT'S THE OVERALL PHILOSOPHY AT AP?

The pillars of AP are mindset, nutrition, movement and recovery – and all four are equally important.

A lot of our clients are strong, fast, very athletically gifted. But what we do very

well at AP is not only educating clients on new training methods and ideas, but also 'tuning up the car' if you like – making sure they understand that, before they run that race or play that game, all their levels have to be topped up. All the elements have to work together: the recovery, the nutrition, the mindset, the movement. It's never just one thing that you need to work on. It's a combination of all those things, and it's doing it efficiently and consistently.

It's really important to educate the athlete about that – to make sure that every client is not only getting to their goal but also understanding the process.

I READ THAT AP ALSO AIMSTO EXTEND THE LONGEVITY OF CLIENTS' SPORTING CAREERS?

We always say that the NFL (National Football League) stands for 'Not For Long'. You have to know how to look



AP gyms are all kitted out to ensure a functional, movement-based focus



Keiser's versatile equipment means gym-based exercise can mirror on-field movements



PHOTOGRAPHY / MICHAEL MCMAHON

Elite athletes visit Athletes' Performance during the sporting off-season, for rehab, prehab and general training

after your body. You have to think long-term. Some athletes really get that and come to us every year. Consistency is key.

IS ALL YOUR TRAINING SPORT-SPECIFIC?

We try and pair up the trainers with the sports they're most passionate about, but we don't work on the skills side of things. More than anything we focus on movement, and a lot of movement patterns are similar across the different sports: multi-directional speed and so on. So essentially we're still talking about the same exercises – it's just how we apply those to each sport.

"OURS IS A VERY OFF-SEASON BASED BUSINESS. WITH THAT SORT OF PRIVATE TRAINING MODEL, YOU HAVE TO BE ADAPTABLE AND DIVERSE"

We do incorporate work that's specific to the various sports, though, and we use equipment that allows for that. We use Keiser's Functional Trainer and Air range in our gyms, for example, because the versatility of the equipment means we can make gym-based movements really specific to the sport – athletes are able to understand how the exercises they do in the gym translate to the field.

Ultimately though, it's all down to the individual's goals, and whether they're with us for one week or eight we'll create a programme around those goals.

DOES ANYONE COME TO YOU JUST FOR REHAB?

Yes, and we have an excellent, very large physical therapy department.

Our approach to physiotherapy is very movement-based, really getting down to the cause of the problem. Sometimes we'll see someone post-surgery, needing to get back on the field, but actually most of the athletes who come to us are pretty banged up, with minor nicks and bruises. Our job is to get them back in peak condition, ready to perform.

We try to bridge the gap between rehab and performance. By working with the performance staff, the nutrition staff – by everybody working together –

we're able to get athletes back in form a lot quicker. We therefore say that, while we offer performance training, we also offer performance physio. It's a seamless continuum between the two.

But our rehab services aren't open to everyone: clients encompass normal, active adults through to professional/college/high school athletes, but all must be active. We don't cater for senior citizen injuries or those who are not physically fit.

SO YOU WORK WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC TOO?

Ours is a very off-season based business. In the US sporting calendar, there are really only three months of the year when athletes are able to come to us. With that sort of private training model, you have to be very adaptable and diverse.

Mark's vision is also to help as many people as we can. So yes, we do the training for a lot of elite athletes and we've had very good results and great credibility over the years. But in addition to that, we also work with youth sports and collegiate athletes, military personnel, and even everyday people – business executives, for example. In addition to our intensive programmes, we have membership packages for those living locally – for one-to-one and/or small group training. ▶





Athletes' Performance has an 'excellent, very large' physio department

"IT'S ABOUT EDUCATING ALL OF OUR CLIENTS ON HOW SIMPLE, EVERYDAY STRATEGIES CAN BRING THEM SUCCESS IN THEIR OWN FIELD"

▶ SO HOW DOES ALL THIS TRANSLATE FOR JOE PUBLIC?

We've taken the AP philosophy and scaled it to an everyday person – for the 'game of life', as opposed to the 'game of sport' with our elite athletes.

Elite athletes preparing for certain results will have a very intensive programme.

On the other hand, if we're working with someone in a high-level, stressful job at a big corporation, we'll focus more on nutrition, on mindset – on being psychologically ready – and create a sustainable programme for them over a longer period of time. But as with the elite athletes, the workouts are still about movement and functionality: these people are often sat at their desk or in a car all day, so we don't want to sit them down at machines.

Recovery is also just as important for non-elite clients – from self-massage and hydrotherapy to the importance of sleep – and is often forgotten. We use a car analogy: if your fuel tank is full, full fluids, tyres pumped up, performance kit on, you'll be able to take that car as fast as it can go. But once you run out of fuel, you have to fill it up again.

Really it's about educating all of our clients, elite or otherwise, on how simple, everyday strategies can bring them success in their own field. We try and give them the tools and understanding they need to do it on their own, when they're not here at AP – an appreciation of the philosophy, of how it all works together to create a sustainable programme and stay fit and healthy.



PHOTOGRAPH / MICHAEL MCNAMARA

Programmes are all individually tailored

HOW DOES THE CONSUMER PROGRAMME WORK?

It's all about customisation and individualising the programme. Every one of our clients goes through an evaluation process: a dietitian meeting, body composition test, a discussion around nutrition strategies, goal-setting. Then we go through a functional movement screen to distinguish their movement patterns and understand their injury history.

It's a 21-point test, and if they score 14 or less we send them directly to the physiotherapist – it means they're not ready to train yet. Again, it goes back to the car analogy. If you just jump in a car and drive off, you won't know anything about it and something might break down. With our clients – elite athletes and Joe Public alike – we want to know everything that's going on with them. That's why we do the evaluation – so we can customise the programme and not go backwards.

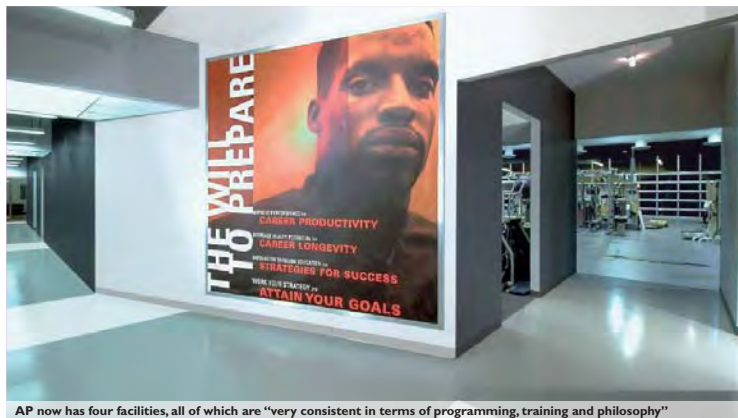
HOW SIGNIFICANT IS THE CONSUMER MARKET FOR AP?

Since the company started, we've always had executive programmes and limited memberships, but over the last three years we've become very involved in corporate wellness, and that will continue to grow.

About two years ago we did a pilot study with Intel. We were based in the Intel offices and worked with 100 of its employees, with a third-party university conducting a study on the outcomes – broader health outcomes as well as impact on fitness levels. We got



Warm-down: Baseball players undergo a session of post-training self-massage



AP now has four facilities, all of which are "very consistent in terms of programming, training and philosophy"

some great results and started having conversations with other companies.

Now we have a consumer brand, Core Performance, and we're working with big corporations like Intel, Sheraton and Walgreens. Essentially we're providing wellness strategies for those companies.

I BELIEVE AP ALSO OFFERS MENTORSHIPS – HOW DO THOSE WORK?

Over the years we've had a lot of interest from the industry, with people wanting to learn what we do. So about five years ago, we launched a mentorship programme with a week-long, residential Level One programme: lectures, practical sessions and an insight into our methodology.

We currently educate 600–700 people from around the globe every year.

Originally we ran our programmes in the US only, but last year we took them to

"OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS, WE'VE BECOME VERY INVOLVED IN CORPORATE WELLNESS. THAT WILL CONTINUE TO GROW"

Germany, the UK, South Africa, Australia. We've designed the course to be relevant to everyone and have had a big impact on trainers of all levels, from high school sports instructors to professional coaches.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PLANS TO EXPAND ABROAD?

In the UK and Europe – where the sporting season for football and rugby, for example, is almost year-round – actually opening an AP facility would probably not be practical. Our business model relies on there being a sporting off-season.

However, we already have our own AP coaches working on-staff, on-site with a number of elite sports teams in the US as well as some international teams – the Argentina Pumas rugby team before the last Rugby World Cup, for example, as well as Germany and Poland's national football teams in preparation for the Euro 2012 championships. This is something we'd like to grow moving forward.

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SCIFIT Ltd UK

research round-up

Swiss scientists believe they've found a brain hormone that could encourage people to push themselves more when exercising

all in the mind

The blood hormone erythropoietin (EPO) naturally occurs in the kidneys to boost the number of red cells, which improves oxygen transportation to the muscles. It's also known as a drug that some athletes allegedly inject regularly in small doses to enhance performance. The practice is not only illegal but dangerous, as EPO can thicken the blood and increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and clots.

However, a new discovery has been made by researchers from the University of Zurich in Switzerland. In an animal-based study, published in *The Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology** (FASEB) in June, they found that EPO has a more dramatic effect in the brain, where it can augment exercise performance – improved VO₂ max and time to exhaustion – without raising the red blood count.

the test

To make the discovery, Max Gassmann, a professor of veterinary physiology, and his colleagues used three groups of mice – all of similar age and bodyweight.

The mice in one group were genetically modified to produce human EPO solely in the brain. Another group were injected with a large dose (2,000 international units) of EPO so it crossed the blood-brain barrier, becoming a brain hormone. A third group of mice remained untreated, for control and comparison purposes.

All animals then underwent a maximal incremental exercise test, followed by a maximal constant load exercise test.

Blood samples were taken before and after exercise, while the levels of EPO in cerebral tissue and plasma was measured afterwards only.



ARND BRONKHORST / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The next step will be to test the performance-enhancing effect of EPO in humans

impact of cerebral epo

The researchers found that mice which harboured human EPO in the brain – whether via genetic modification or injection – ran significantly faster and for longer than those in the control group. In both groups, this occurred independently of changes in hematologic (blood) or cardiovascular parameters.

This suggests that EPO has a motivational effect, rather than purely a physical one. "We assume that EPO in the brain triggers a motivation boost to increase physical performance," says Gassmann. "Most probably EPO has a general effect on a person's mood and might be used in patients suffering from depression and related diseases."

Indeed, recent studies by a group of German-Danish researchers show that EPO can also help improve the mental performance of schizophrenia sufferers.

misleading reports

Following the publication of Gassmann's research, there has been much hype in the media that EPO could possibly be used in pill form to help motivate people to exercise more.

The speculation is based on a quote made by Gerald Weissmann, editor-in-chief of the *FASEB* journal, in response to the findings: "If you can't put exercise in a pill, then maybe you can put the motivation to exercise in a pill instead."

However, Gassmann told *Health Club Management*: "We have not found a pill that motivates you to go to the gym as reports on the internet suggest. We [only] show that once exercising, the performance will be higher if EPO is present in the brain."

The next step is to test the performance-enhancing effect of EPO in human volunteers.

*Gassmann et al. Acute and chronic elevation of erythropoietin in the brain improves exercise performance in mice without inducing erythropoiesis. *The FASEB Journal*, June 12

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SOCIAL SKILLS

One of the world's greatest marketers, Seth Godin, famously asked: "How can you squander even one more day not taking advantage of the greatest shifts of our generation? How dare you settle for less when the world has made it so easy for you to be remarkable?"

He was, of course, referencing the vast momentum behind social media, and certainly many gyms are now starting to explore this arena, with Facebook often chosen as the entry point. But as Simon Bolton pointed out in his recent feature (see *HCM* June 12, p62), social media can be a double-edged sword – it has to be done correctly, otherwise it can be detrimental to your brand.

Having worked in the arena of member communications for the last decade, we at Retention Management have therefore spent the last year asking: "What do we really know about Facebook from a health club operator's perspective?" Our conclusions are as follows....

IT DOES COST MONEY...

Many clubs are fooled by the fact that it costs nothing to open a social media account, failing to consider the expenses of running that account: staff costs, in terms of time and money, to both start and maintain the campaign. Many clubs go on to employ community managers to answer customer queries and maintain a spam-free environment. Should you

WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA? JON NASTA GIVES AN OVERVIEW OF CURRENT BEST PRACTICE IN THE FITNESS INDUSTRY

choose to outsource your social media campaign, do you outsource all of it or a part of it – and what will be the ongoing costs involved in doing so?

And if your campaign proves highly successful, how will you find the investment to keep the ball rolling? More in-depth tools for social media, such as tracking, attract a cost that will escalate as your campaign gathers momentum.

You must also continually provide relevant and interesting content: it's not an overstatement to say that the three most important elements in e-comms are content, content and content (see also *HCM* March 12, p48). Indeed, in a recent survey by mashable.com, the top three reasons given for following a Facebook fan page were: special offers or deals (36.9 per cent); being a current customer (32.9 per cent); and to receive interesting or entertaining content (18.2 per cent).

A huge myth surrounding social media is that 'if you build it, they will

come'. If you want followers, you must also add your own advertising to the mix, at a minimum adding 'follow' buttons to your e-comms channels and using email advertising.

... BUT THERE CAN BE AN ROI

On the upside, major brands that have been using Facebook for more than two years are reporting that fans do indeed spend more and are also more likely to stay using that brand. McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Nokia and Nike all report that the average annual spend by a Facebook fan is more than double that of a non-Facebook fan.

Recent research by Synapse also reported that a Facebook fan is 28 per cent more likely than a non-fan to continue to use a product or service, and also 41 per cent more likely to recommend a service or product to family and friends.

As an industry fighting to expand its market penetration and drive retention, these stats offer the fitness industry the most tempting hook – fans/followers, it seems, will use us for longer and recommend us more. And yet in spite of this data, relatively few clubs have truly embraced social media to date – and many of those that have are still forming conclusions as to what their pages are actually achieving. We take a look at a selection of case studies from across the fitness industry – companies that have made a success of social media.

Case Study 1: TOPNOTCH

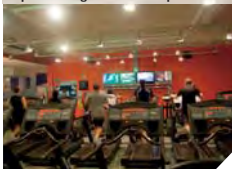
Having worked with Retention Management for three years, reducing attrition by over 6 per cent annually across its estate, UK operator Topnotch then turned to the supplier to review its social media delivery.

Topnotch's numerous Facebook sites across its estate were disjointed, with varying levels of Facebook management aptitude in evidence, and with different clubs adopting different approaches. Retention Management therefore designed a uniform look for all the clubs' pages, with tabs providing website

links for classes, guest passes and personal training.

Email communications were synergised with all Facebook and web pages – proven to enhance the overall impact of social media by allowing members to easily jump to content of interest to them.

Topnotch: Regular content updates



Clubs have since seen a marked increase in traffic, and the number of likes/followers has grown. One site had taken a year to gain 100 followers on Facebook; this grew to over 400 after just two months of working with Retention Management.

"The content provided by Retention Management on our Facebook pages every week is relevant to our members – and, crucially, educational. The quality of the content we deliver has been vital to our recent social media success," says Steve Bradley, director at Topnotch.

"Secondly, the content is regularly refreshed. At the moment, we simply don't have time to consistently monitor walls and post content ourselves."



A Facebook fan is 28 per cent more likely than a non-fan to continue using a product

Case Study 2: **HOT BIKRAM YOGA**

Hot Bikram Yoga (HBY) runs three successful studios in London, UK. Over the past three years, it has developed an extensive database of Bikram 'yogis' with whom the company regularly communicates, including a monthly newsletter – the perfect launch pad for its Facebook and Twitter strategy.

Working with Hattrick Marketing, HBY plans the content for its social media channels up to three months in advance, with monthly themes. April's London Marathon theme, for example, included a 'bring your medal for a discounted 10-class pass' campaign, which ran on the Facebook and Twitter sites. Content focused on interesting stories about HBY students and staff who were competing. The offer was also promoted on the *Runners World*

newsletter and website, with an online Q&A for runners about Bikram, driving new students to the studios.

Within five months of launching, the Facebook page had over 4,000 'likes' and more than 200 people 'talking about' the brand at any one time.

Meanwhile the Twitter account had nearly 3,000 followers.

HBY's social media activity continues to build a strong relationship between the brand and its students, driving not only customer loyalty but also new customer acquisition.



Social media drives loyalty at Hot Bikram Yoga

Case Study 3:

KLICK FITNESS

As a relative newcomer to the market, Klick Fitness – Fitness First's now apparently aborted foray into budget clubs in late 2011 – had a number of objectives for its social media strategy.

Its first priority, however, was to build an online community via Facebook in the shortest possible timeframe. To do this, it worked with D2F Group, which offers specialist software that integrates seamlessly into Facebook.

Klick Fitness caught the attention of its admirers by giving a free gift to every 'liker'. With an iPad as the star prize, 'likes' quickly increased: within the six weeks of the campaign, 'likes' increased by 84 per cent to over 7,000. This result compares favourably to similar operators on a 'like by site' basis, and provided Klick with an excellent platform to implement its social media strategy.

Each 'liker' was offered a reward, allocated at random – but whether their reward was an iPad, a pair of trainers, an annual membership, Polar heart rate monitor or personal training session, the onus was on the 'liker' to redeem their reward.

By using D2F's technology, Klick Fitness therefore benefited financially from non-redemption of rewards; on average, D2F's reward software delivers redemptions of 60 per cent across the health club sector, meaning an average 40 per cent saving on the cost of goods for a campaign.

Geraldine Tuck, sales & marketing director at D2F, says: "D2F's Facebook reward software gives our clients the opportunity to rapidly accelerate the growth of their online community while giving fans a really positive message. Clients that use our software continually comment that goodwill of this nature has built strong, loyal and lasting relationships with their Facebook community, both at a regional and a national level."



Klick: Rewards for 'likes'

"In six weeks, Klick Fitness increased 'likes' by 84 per cent, to over 7,000. This compared favourably to similar operators on a 'like by site' basis"

Hot Bikram Yoga ran
a London Marathon-
themed campaign

Case Study 4:

GOODLIFE FITNESS

One of the earliest adopters of social media was Goodlife Fitness in Canada.

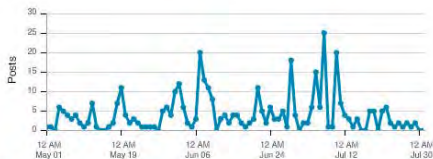
Justin Cipparone, Goodlife's social media manager, describes a recent social media campaign targeting youths to get active: "Our Teen Fitness programme ran during July and August 2011 – our second year running the scheme – and will run again this year. Teens aged between 12 and 17 can work out for free at any of our club locations across Canada during their summer break.

"We promoted the campaign through traditional media – direct mail and posters at the clubs – but also included a social component,

using Facebook and Twitter to drive awareness. We asked two local college students to produce videos to promote the programme and posted them on YouTube. Plus we invited an active teen to be our spokesperson, writing articles for our blog about how she has fun and keeps fit during the summer.

"Parents could register their teens for the programme online, with the registration then being activated in-club. We had over 65,000 online registrations in 2011, up from 35,000 in 2010. That translated into 35,000 activated memberships, up from 19,000 in 2010, with 1,600 of those teens signing up for a full year's membership after participating in the programme.

"From a social media perspective, we had 385 tracked conversations about Teen Fitness between 1 May and 30 July 2011." (See chart below)



teen fitness

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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WORLD of OPPORTUNITY

EUROPE
FOCUS

Kevin Scott outlines the challenges and opportunities of the forthcoming switch to the SEPA payments system across Europe

The Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) is a European Union (EU) payments integration initiative. The SEPA vision was set out by EU governments in the Lisbon Agenda, March 2000, which aims to make Europe more dynamic and competitive.

In simple terms, SEPA is designed to enable cross-border electronic Euro payment/collections within the 32 EU countries currently participating in the scheme – the 27 EU Member States plus Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Monaco. SEPA collections can also be made to Europe from the UK or other non-Eurozone countries, but these payments or collections would be in Euros.

At present, each country in the EU has a local or legacy payment solution. In the UK this is BACS; all other countries use something similar. Using BACS means that we can make payments or collect direct debits in the UK, but not

beyond our borders. It is the same for all other EU countries.

However, SEPA allows companies to collect direct debits from any EU country in Euros. This change to the European payments landscape benefits both individuals and businesses, as it enables money to be moved more easily, quickly and efficiently across the participating countries.

Towards a single system

The concept of SEPA has been mooted for many years. However, it was with the introduction of the SEPA Credit Transfer (SCT) in January 2008 that SEPA finally became a reality. SEPA Direct Debit has now followed and, after a slow start, volumes of the product have begun to rise: by May 2010, around 6.5 per cent of credit transfers in Europe were SEPA-compliant, compared to 2.9 per cent a year earlier. Nevertheless, as a percentage

of Harlands Group's total collections in the UK, SEPA collections still represent less than 0.5 per cent – this in spite of the fact that, in 2011, Harlands was the largest UK producer of SEPA Direct Debits.

One of the primary hurdles to greater uptake of SEPA has been the staggered nature of implementation, with SCT coming first and an initial non-obligatory introduction; most companies using credit or debit transfers have remained with the legacy solutions. And of course, the introduction of SEPA has hardly been assisted by the financial crisis, both globally and in the Eurozone over the past three years, which doesn't appear to be getting any healthier. However, despite media interest in the potential demise of the Euro, it is inconceivable that the Eurozone will unwind, other than the likely withdrawal of Greece: SEPA is here to stay.

In February 2012, the European legislator applied a ruling which



Clubs could find themselves with lots of members, but no way to collect fees from them



- established technical and business requirements for credit transfers and direct debits in the Eurozone. This ruling defines 1 February 2014 as the deadline in the Euro area for compliance with the core provisions of SEPA. In simple terms, all Eurozone countries must move to SEPA by February 2014 and all legacy solutions will in effect be 'switched off'. Effectively, this means that existing national Euro credit transfer and direct debit schemes (legacy) will be replaced by SEPA Credit Transfer (SCT) and SEPA Direct Debit (SDD).

Are the banks prepared?

It became mandatory for the banks in all Eurozone countries to have adopted SEPA by November 2010, and since then SEPA has been running in parallel with the legacy solutions. However, our experience is that banks in different countries vary

Clubs will need to get members to re-sign their direct debit agreements

"1 FEBRUARY 2014 IS THE EUROZONE DEADLINE FOR COMPLIANCE WITH SEPA – LEGACY SOLUTIONS WILL THEN BE SWITCHED OFF"



in how fluent they've become in handling SEPA collections: despite systems being in place, the efficiency of the system has been slow to develop and adoption of SEPA by the banks has been slow – perhaps not surprising given that the legacy systems still provide the vast majority of revenue for the banks.

Adoption in the UK has been even slower, but this is likely to change as SEPA becomes the norm in the Eurozone; indeed, the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) is already leading the way in the UK. Harlands' SEPA solution has in fact been built with RBS, which has its own platform to accept SEPA file data; SEPA implementation relies on all banks providing for the handling of SEPA mandates, and unlike with BACS, SEPA files flow direct to the bank.

"At RBS, we have actively been preparing for the change to SEPA. Our SEPA Direct

Debit Scheme launched in early 2011, working with the Harlands Group as our first live customer," says Natalie Willems-Rosman, head of international payments at RBS Group. "SEPA Direct Debits have allowed the Harlands Group, already a key player in gym membership fees collection in the UK, to expand into new regions: it is now collecting from Spain and the Netherlands. Harlands was quick to adopt the new standards and translate those into a unique model that allows gyms to manage their members' collections 'the SEPA way'."

She continues: "For businesses who want/need to start using SEPA Direct Debits, our advice is to start as soon as possible. It takes time to adopt the new way of working, but most importantly, this will allow them to benefit as soon as possible. We are currently assisting businesses all across Europe with their journey to SEPA, and being a first mover in the market has allowed us to get invaluable experience as to how the products work for our customers."

Implementing the changes

On a technical level, SEPA provides a cross-border solution with a set of standards for all participating countries. However, it also represents a change in the technology being used – a move from flat file processing to xml file processing.

SEPA therefore means a lot of change for businesses operating in Europe, as payment messages and file format types will be different (changing from flat file to xml). That means a change in the way data is submitted for direct debit submissions changes. Bank account details will also be different, switching to IBAN (international bank account number); all bank accounts will be referenced by IBAN from now on.

This is specifically challenging for businesses using direct debits, as they will need to replace existing software generating direct debit files and learn to capture more data. All existing direct debits will also need to be re-signed in the SEPA format.

Potentially the greatest concern is that if you run a health club, or clubs, in the Eurozone, you will need to go back to each and every member and have them sign a new SEPA Direct Debit mandate, otherwise you will have no mechanism to collect the fees. At present, there is no indication that a method to 'flip' existing local or legacy direct debit (DD) mandates over to SEPA will be available – new mandates will need to be provided.

New mandates can come from online sources or hard copy paper, but as we all know, getting members back into clubs to complete a new DD mandate is not going ▶



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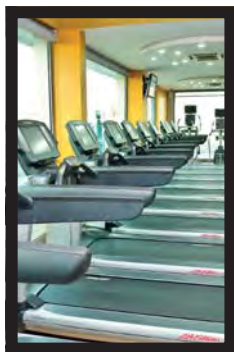
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Anytime Fitness (both images) has already switched to SEPA



“EXISTING CLUBS NEED TO SWITCH TO SEPA – THE SOONER THE BETTER. NEW CLUBS MAY BE BETTER TO USE SEPA FROM THE OUTSET”

- to be easy. Getting ‘sleepers’ to sign a new mandate may be even more difficult. Consequently, there could be significant financial implications relating to loss of members during the switchover phase.

It would therefore seem logical to begin the process much earlier than February 2014, launching SEPA DD and gathering new SEPA DD mandates from members as soon as possible. If all members have already provided SEPA mandates, or are even already being collected via SEPA DD before February 2014, then the risk of member cancellation has been eliminated. Indeed, Anytime Fitness has already made the decision to process all new business in the EU via SEPA; come the switch, it will be immune from any member fallout.

However, any operators leaving the switchover until the last minute will potentially suffer huge losses, finding themselves with lots of members but no way of collecting fees.

Operator opportunities

Although the migration will be a potentially difficult phase, SEPA is also a world of opportunity. This new standardised framework allows businesses to easily expand into different European countries, while also centralising administration and costs.

If you are planning, or about to open, a new health club in the Eurozone,

using SEPA DD from the outset offers multiple benefits: not only the ability to take direct debits from any EU national bank account, but also avoiding the need to switch and have all members re-sign in only 18 months’ time.

SEPA also means that moving into another European country and opening clubs – or any other business using direct debit – is now significantly less complicated. For Anytime Fitness, for example – a US franchise expanding into Europe – the rollout is much easier than it would previously have been, as there is no need to seek new partners and billing platforms in each country.

Do you have clubs in different European countries? If so, then you will currently operate legacy (local) direct debit platforms in each country. SEPA means you can now run all clubs from a single solution, thereby significantly reducing administration costs and also offering greater flexibility to members.

Clubs will also be able to set up direct debits easily with members without bank accounts in their country. For instance, students studying abroad could still use home bank accounts to join health clubs.

Perhaps you’re based in the UK, but with a service you could sell across the EU? Any business in the UK, or other EU country, could begin to take direct debits from customers across the Eurozone. This could

be health club-based, or any subscription or recurring payment-based service or product. SEPA means an ability to reach a much wider audience while still using the UK as a base, removing the previous need to set up legacy systems in each country.

There are also real business advantages to SEPA for clients, with clearing time reduced from three days to one day.

Time to act

Health club operators in the Eurozone need to begin thinking about the implications of SEPA now. Existing clubs will need to change – and the sooner the better – while new clubs may be better to use SEPA from the outset. Expansion into other Eurozone countries will now be much easier from a payments perspective, and there will be no need to seek authorisation to process by means of the legacy platform. Once you are a SEPA user, the whole of the Eurozone opens up to you.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin Scott is director of the Harlands Group – in conjunction with RBS, the first UK company of any sort to develop a SEPA platform. Its systems act as a translation process for any business in the Eurozone to convert flat files into SEPA format, with solutions that allow data to be entered online, manually or by file import. Clients can also manage all direct debit mandates and customers via its SEPA cloud member access solution.

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CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

THE ENERGY DESK'S MANAGING DIRECTOR IAN EDWARDS TAKES A
LOOK AT THE BEST WAY OF GETTING CREDIT TO PAY FOR ENERGY USE

The global financial downturn affected all aspects of business and consumer life, including the energy sector. This has been particularly noticeable in relation to the issue of energy procurement.

Even an organisation with a high credit rating will wince at the prospect of a utility company's credit check. If you haven't undergone one of these credit checks yourself, you may ask why. For most, the answer will undoubtedly be the same: the depth and detail of the credit check is incomparable to any other, and a poor credit rating can pose a host of challenges when it comes to purchasing energy.

Methods of energy procurement have changed significantly over the past few years. An organisation was once able to pay for the energy it used in arrears, but must now calculate projected energy consumption, sign contracts for anything from two- to five-year terms, and pay hefty deposits of three to six months to the utility company upfront.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Your credit rating determines the terms of your energy contract, including the tariff, deposit value and contract timeframe. If you're a new company,

without historical accounts, you will have little or no credit rating. If you have a high credit limit of £1m but your credit score from Experian falls below 51, your potential supplier will probe into your accounts, and this has become a common problem within the leisure and retail industry. Having a low credit rating will undoubtedly result in your business being tied into a contract on a higher tariff.

What's more, if you are unable to enter into a contract with a utility company, you won't benefit from lower contract rates and your tariff could rocket to three or four times higher than the contract tariff.

With the UK sport and leisure industry spending an estimated £700m every year on energy use, this can present huge challenges in the management of cashflow.

But providing energy is not without risk to the supplier. Utility companies will buy your energy upfront and your credit rating is the only factor that can indicate the risk you pose to them. For example, a £500k spend on a three-year contract adds up to a £1.5m energy spend that the supplier will have to purchase upfront. If you have a low credit rating, you will – in the eyes of the supplier – be at risk of defaulting. Without a guarantee of payments, utility companies will risk taking on the financial burden should you not use

or not pay for the energy they have invested in on your behalf.

Yet it remains a fact that poor credit, coupled with UK government pressure to reduce usage and carbon emissions, is leaving companies with a difficult dilemma. With the deposits taking up so much of a company's credit limit, little budget is left to purchase energy-saving technology to meet UK government targets. In some cases, companies have no budget at all to invest in consumption reduction equipment and systems.

ADDRESSING THE CREDIT CRISIS

But there are solutions on offer. Ultimately, to effectively manage your energy costs, you need to be in control. There is no denying that energy prices are set to soar and a valuable means to combating the increase in cost is to get a handle on the energy you use and find ways to cut back your consumption.

Though the health of your credit rating is critical to your energy procurement, there are ways and means of ensuring that payment for utilities won't break the bank. Timing is everything. If you purchase your energy at the right time, you can tie yourself into a more economical contract.

Consultants and purchasing consortia are also in a position to speak to your

**"UTILITY COMPANIES WILL BUY YOUR ENERGY UPFRONT,
AND YOUR CREDIT RATING IS THE ONLY FACTOR THAT
CAN INDICATE THE DEFAULT RISK YOU POSE TO THEM"**



The sport and leisure sector spends an estimated £700m a year on energy

“A NUMBER OF FINANCIAL PRODUCTS ARE BEING DEVELOPED TO BRIDGE THE GAP WHEN IT COMES TO PAYING YOUR ENERGY DEPOSIT”

In 2010, Coventry Sports Trust – which manages Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre – appointed Pureworld Technology to commission an energy reduction strategy, to help achieve its target of saving 12 per cent of the complex's electricity, gas and water consumption.

With over 900,000 visits a year, Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre consumed an estimated 3,127,069 kWh in 2010, equating to 1,679 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

Built in 1966, the centre comprises two complexes: a wet-side including an Olympic size pool, leisure and teaching pools, two gyms, two exercise studios, a health suite and a crèche; and a dry-side complex offering a 10-court sports hall, bowls hall, squash courts and changing rooms.

Pureworld Technology completed an initial site survey of plant equipment to establish inefficiencies across the facility, as

well as an analysis of the building's consumption data, and proposed a scope of works.

Equipment that was identified as inefficient was decommissioned, with upgraded technology retrofitted where efficiency could be enhanced. Integral to any energy reduction plan is the installation of appropriate metering, allowing for monitoring of consumption, and an automatic meter reading system was therefore introduced to provide accurate data.

The scope of works included the installation of a new building management system, optimising the boilers and air-handling units. Variable speed drives were also installed onto the site's motors to control frequency and control electrical supply to its air conditioning systems.

Economical high-frequency lighting was installed in the main sports hall, including dimmable settings and absence-detection technology to ensure lighting only comes on when the facilities are in use.

A variety of water conservation measures were also implemented, including Save-a-Flush bags in WC cisterns, estimated to save 4,000 litres of water annually. Upgraded water management controls, including aerated showers and the installation of a water meter to monitor consumption, helped further reduce water use.

As a result of these changes, the centre benefited from electricity savings of 15.29 per cent, gas savings of 11.3 per cent and water savings of 15.5 per cent, equating to a predicted annual saving of £83,160.

Case Study: COVENTRY SPORTS TRUST



The centre predicts annual savings of £83,160

Cotswold District Council in Gloucestershire is committed to reducing its carbon footprint. The council's carbon management plan, which aims to reduce carbon emissions by 25 per cent by 2015, forms part of its 'Cleaner and Greener' campaign – an initiative geared towards reducing the council's overall environmental impact.

In line with this campaign, the council identified the Cotswold Leisure Centre as a facility where several sustainability targets could be met through a reduction in electricity consumption.

The council recognised that voltage optimisation – an electrical energy-saving technique in which a device is installed in series with the mains electricity supply, to provide an optimum supply voltage for the site's equipment – can help lower carbon emissions and reduce energy costs. It therefore asked EMSc (UK) Ltd to complete a site survey to assess whether voltage optimisation could help realise savings at the centre.

"On the whole, the National Grid supplies a higher voltage than is generally

required," says EMSc (UK) MD Dr Alex Mardapittas. "Although the nominal voltage in the UK is 230V, the average delivered is actually 242V. This 'over-voltage' means that energy consumption is not only higher, but as a result, the lifespan of equipment is shortened."

Voltage optimisation has also been shown to improve power quality by balancing phase voltages and filtering harmonics, as well as transients from the electricity supply, leading to reduced maintenance costs as less demand is placed on equipment.

It was found that the centre could realise substantial savings by implementing voltage optimisation technology, and a 286kVA Powerstar unit was installed. This helped reduce the centre's direct electricity consumption – an overall energy saving of 8 per cent was achieved – while CO₂ emissions were reduced by 54 tonnes. The council also achieved an annual saving of £7,800 on electricity costs.



Powerstar: Reducing consumption

- utility provider on your behalf, to negotiate the terms of your contract and mitigate the risk to all parties. For example, a consultancy can tender out to suppliers and filter each one, not only to

find the best prices, but also to determine any obstacles you may face when it comes to accommodating the deposit requests of the utility companies.

Meanwhile, a number of financial products are currently being developed by suppliers and financial houses to bridge the gap when it comes to paying your energy deposit. Currently proving popular in the US is the use of unsecured loans through merchant banks; if this solution is rolled out in the UK, it will provide finance to the trader to pay the deposit for the energy contracts.

Utility deposit bonds are also currently available for larger deposits of between £50,000 and £1m, although these often require extensive security checks, including an insurance policy and a bank guarantee. The advantage of this option is that the customer will benefit from a cheaper financial tariff on the back of the guarantee provided to the utility company.

There are also emerging ways and means for companies to seek funding support for energy management and technology solutions. In November 2011, for example, the government launched

its Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), an initiative that provides capital investment for businesses to install renewable heat generation equipment. By essentially footing the bill, the scheme is enabling the installation of technologies such as ground source heat pumps or combined heat and power systems in non-domestic buildings up and down the country. Furthermore, it's enabling companies to recoup savings to put towards further energy-efficiency measures.

Getting to grips with your energy use can be a daunting prospect, but there is a lot of support out there; it's simply a case of looking in the right places.

THE ENERGY EVENT

The Energy Event is the UK's leading exhibition and conference for industrial, commercial, public and not-for-profit users of energy. It targets professionals who are looking to get a grip on their company's energy use, comply with legislation and put in place sustainable and cost-effective energy efficiency and procurement solutions.

It offers a CPD-certified conference, spread across four theatres and featuring over 70 speakers, alongside an exhibition showcasing 190 energy management and efficiency product and service providers.

Find out more and register for a free place by quoting 'Health' at www.theenergyevent.com

Dates: 11–12 September 2012

Venue: Halls 7 & 8,

NEC Birmingham, UK

Details: www.theenergyevent.com

Case Study: COTSWOLD LEISURE CENTRE



A longer version of this article appeared in *Leisure Management*, issue 2 2012, p62, as part of a series of features on energy-related issues.

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HEALTH CLUB AWARDS 2012

The official shortlist has now been announced for the second annual Members Choice Health Club Awards, sponsored by Centrum Performance

The Health Club Awards, organised in partnership with *Health Club Management*, aim to find out which clubs offer the best all-round customer experience based purely on ratings from members.

This year, 450 clubs entered and 37,000 votes were cast between 1 February and 30 April. Simon Brown, MD of Health Club Awards, says: "The competition is all about engaging members and motivating staff, and that's exactly what we've achieved. We're absolutely delighted by the efforts made by participating clubs to get their members involved in the voting."

A total of 180 clubs and leisure centres made this year's shortlist in 24 regions around the UK, offering localised marketing benefits: every shortlisted club will receive the Members Choice Health Club Awards 'Shortlist' logo, plus a bespoke press release and access to a detailed Member Feedback Report.

The next stage of the competition is a second phase of vote auditing, which will determine the gold, silver and bronze winners in each region and nationally.

member recognition

The Laboratory Spa & Health Clubs, based in north London, have both been shortlisted this year. General manager Seb Barre says: "We're absolutely



thrilled that both of our clubs have been shortlisted – and the fact that this has been voted for by our members makes it even more significant. We strive to go the extra mile for all of our members, and it's great to see that our hard work and dedication has been recognised."

As well as the regions, there are national categories for best Budget, Small, Medium and National Chains. QHotels, which won gold in the Best Medium Chain category last year, is shortlisted once again. Dave Heap, group leisure and spa manager, says: "We're delighted to have 12 of our clubs shortlisted in the regions, and to be shortlisted for Best Medium Chain again. These awards are of great importance to us, as they are voted for by our members and give us a greater understanding of their thoughts, needs and opinions."

The énergie Group has had all three of its core brands shortlisted. David Beattie, brand and marketing director, says: "The Health Club Awards give a transparent indication of what customers think. To have 36 énergie sites shortlisted across all three brands is testament that our franchise owners are delivering great customer service and facilities. I would like to congratulate each and every club selected for the shortlist, and wish them further success in the winning stages. We're equally delighted to have all three brands shortlisted for the National Chain categories."

David Lloyd Leisure, which has entered for the first time, has a number of clubs shortlisted regionally and is in with a chance of taking the Best National Chain award. Huw Davies-Thomas, head of marketing communications, says: "We're delighted that 16 of our clubs have been shortlisted and that DLL is up for the prestigious accolade of Best National Chain. There is no better recognition and honour than being nominated by our highly-valued members – the very people who drive us to provide the best facilities, services and expertise we possibly can."

2012 AWARDS CEREMONY

The gold, silver and bronze winners for the regions, the national chain categories and the two Grand Prix categories – Best Club in the UK (under 2,000 members) and Best Club in the UK (2,000+ members) – will be announced at the second annual Health Club Awards ceremony, which takes place alongside Leisure Industry Week (LIW) on 18 September 2012. The black tie event, to be held at the Hilton Metropole Birmingham, will be attended by over 500 guests.

Further details about the awards, as well as ticket information, can be found at: www.healthclubawards.co.uk



SCOTLAND EAST

Aberdeen Sports Village
David Lloyd Leisure Aberdeen
David Lloyd Leisure Dundee
Energy Fitness Club Dundee
Energy Fitness for Women Montrose
LivingWell Dundee
Pure Gym Aberdeen
Pure Gym Edinburgh City Centre
Pure Gym Edinburgh Ocean Terminal

SCOTLAND WEST

David Lloyd Leisure Glasgow
Energy Fitness Club Oban
Energy Fitness for Women East Kilbride
Pure Gym Glasgow
The Peak Stirling
Westerwood Hotel Cumbernauld

NORTHERN IRELAND

Fit4Less Club Lisburn
Pure Gym Belfast

NORTH WEST – North

All Seasons Leisure Centre Chorley
Clayton Green Sports Centre
David Lloyd Leisure Knowsley
Energy Fitness for Women Blackburn
Energy Fitness for Women Preston
Hello Fitness Bolton
Pendle Wavelength & Inside Spa Nelson
Village Health & Fitness Herons' Roach Blackpool

NORTH WEST – South

Crewe Hall Hotel
Energy Fitness Club Warrington
Park Royal Hotel Warrington
Pure Gym Manchester Spinningfields
Pure Gym Manchester Urban Exchange
Pure Gym Warrington
The Midland Hotel Manchester
Thornton Hall Country Health Club

NORTH EAST

Fit4Less Club Hartlepool
Xercise4Less Stockton-on-Tees

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

Cole Valley Leisure Centre
Crown Spa Scarborough
David Lloyd Leisure Hull
David Lloyd Leisure Leeds
David Lloyd Leisure York
LivingWell Sheffield
Pure Gym Leeds
Pure Gym Sheffield
Tankersley Manor Hotel
Xercise4Less Wakefield

WALES

Fit4Less Club Port Talbot
LivingWell Newport
Pure Gym Cardiff
Spa Naturel Mercure Cardiff Holland House Health Club

WEST MIDLANDS – North

David Lloyd Leisure Solihull South
Pure Gym Stoke on Trent
Pure Gym Wolverhampton
Sandwell Leisure Trust Haden Hill Leisure Centre
Sandwell Leisure Trust Smethwick Swimming Centre
Telford Golf and Hotel Resort

WEST MIDLANDS – South

Chesford Grange Hotel
David Lloyd Leisure Bromsgrove
Everyone Active Stratford Leisure Centre
Fit4Less Club Redditch
LivingWell Birmingham
Nuffield Health Nuneaton
Pure Gym Birmingham City
Pure Gym Coventry
The Hampton Health and Fitness Club

EAST MIDLANDS – North

David Lloyd Leisure Nottingham
Energy Fitness for Women Arnold
Energy Fitness for Women Long Eaton
Everyone Active Festival Hall Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Huddersfield Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Llamas Leisure Centre
Nuffield Health Mapperley
The Nottingham Belfry Hotel

EAST MIDLANDS – East

David Lloyd Leisure Lincoln Burton Waters
Everyone Active Cleethorpe Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Grimsby Pool
Everyone Active West Lindsey Leisure Centre
Forest Pines Hotel Broughton
Yarborough Leisure Centre

EAST MIDLANDS – South

David Lloyd Leisure Leicester
Everyone Active Enderby Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Hinckley Leisure Centre
LivingWell Leicester
Loughborough Leisure Centre
Pure Gym Leicester

EAST OF ENGLAND

Cambridge Belfry Hotel
David Lloyd Leisure Luton
Energy Fitness Club Leighton Buzzard
Energy Fitness Club Liscombe Park
Energy Fitness for Women Ely
Everyone Active Stradford Leisure Centre
One Leisure Huntingdon
One Leisure St Ives
One Leisure St Neots

SOUTH WEST – South

David Lloyd Leisure Exeter
Energy Fitness for Women Teignmouth
Everyone Active Leisure Centre Pende (Dolphin)
Everyone Active Rossmore Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Weymouth Pool & Fitness Centre
Pure Gym Bournemouth

SOUTH WEST – North

Anytime Fitness Bristol
Bath Sports and Leisure Centre
Centurion Fitness Centre Bath
Everyone Active Easton Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Henbury Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Horfield Leisure Centre
Keynham Leisure Centre
South Wandley Sports Centre
The Fitness Hub Portishead

SOUTHERN – North

David Lloyd Leisure Oxford
Energy Fitness for Women Bicester
Energy Fitness for Women Newport Pagnell
Fit4Less Club Chesham
Fit4Less Club Swindon
Fitness4Less Cheltenham
LivingWell Milton Keynes
LivingWell Newbury North
LivingWell Reading
National Badminton Centre

SOUTHERN – South

Bitterne Leisure Centre
David Lloyd Leisure Ringwood
David Lloyd Leisure Southampton
Energy Fitness Club Andover
Energy Fitness for Women Farnham
Energy Fitness for Women Havant
Energy Fitness for Women Portsmouth
Fit4Less Club Farnborough
Hampshire Court Hotel
Pure Gym Southampton

LONDON – North

Archway Leisure Centre
Energy Fitness Club Fulham
Fit4Less Club Tower Hill
H2 Bike Run Soho
Highbury Pool and Fitness Centre
Islington Tennis Centre
The Laboratory Spa & Health Club Mill Hill
The Laboratory Spa & Health Club Muswell Hill
YMCA Central London

LONDON – South

Energy Fitness Club Forest Hill
Fitness4Less Southwark
LivingWell London Docklands
Pure Gym London Oval
Pure Gym London Wandsworth
Wavelengths Leisure Centre
YMCA Wimbledon

SOUTH EAST – North (Essex)

Energy Fitness for Women Chelmsford
Everyone Active Basildon Sporting Village
Everyone Active Central Park Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Epping Sports Centre
Everyone Active Hornchurch Sports Centre
Everyone Active Loughton Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Ongar Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre
Stock Brook Golf and Country Club

SOUTH EAST – North (Herts & Middlesex)

Energy Fitness Club Northwick Park
Energy Fitness for Women St Albans
Everyone Active Farnshaw Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Spelthorne Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Sunbury Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Watford Woodside Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Watford Central Leisure Centre
Topnotch Health Club Brentford

SOUTH EAST – South (Sussex & W. Sussex)

Cranehill Golf & Country Club
Energy Fitness Club Croydon
Energy Fitness Club East Grinstead
Everyone Active Cheam Leisure Centre
Everyone Active Phoenix Leisure Centre
Fit4Less Club Epsom
Nuffield Health Suburban
Pure Gym Walton on Thames
Slindford Golf & Country Club
YMCA Hawker Centre Kingston

SOUTH EAST – South (Kent & E. Sussex)

Ashford International Hotel
David Lloyd Leisure Maidstone
Energy Fitness for Women Eastbourne
LivingWell Maidstone
The Weald Leisure Centre
Topnotch Health Club Maidstone

MEMBERS' CHOICE HEALTH CLUB AWARDS 2012



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OFFICIAL SHORTLIST

BEST BUDGET CHAIN (5+ clubs)

Fit4Less
Fitness4Less
Pure Gym

BEST SMALL CHAIN (3-9 clubs)

Fitness4Less
One Leisure
Sandwell Leisure
Topnotch
Xercise4Less
YMCA London South West

BEST MEDIUM CHAIN (10-30 clubs)

Active Nation
Aquaterra
Fit4Less
Fusion Lifestyle
Pure Gym
Q Hotels

BEST NATIONAL CHAIN (30+ clubs)

David Lloyd Leisure
Energy Fitness Clubs
Energy Fitness for Women
Everyone Active
LivingWell

GRAND PRIX CATEGORIES

Best Club in the UK (less than 2,000 members)
All clubs shortlisted with less than 2,000 members
are eligible for this category

Best Club in the UK (2,000 members or more)
All clubs shortlisted with 2,000 members or more
are eligible for this category

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ANY QUESTIONS

THE PANEL



David Stalker
CEO, FIA



Sean Holt
CEO, CIMSPA



Martin Kay
Member of
sporta National
Executive



Martin Guyton
Leisure contracts
manager,
Tonbridge &
Malling Borough
Council



Phil Attwell
Director of sport
& student activity,
University of
Exeter



Chris Holliday
Head of leisure
and community
health, Walsall
Council

In a Question Time-style forum held at SIBEC UK in May, suppliers and operators posed questions to a panel of industry experts. Katie Lewis summarises the key points

Q Should we be focusing more on the benefits of wellness, in addition to fitness?

Gerard McCarthy, sales director, Dalesauna

Martin Kay

I believe we're currently missing out on the wellness opportunity: we talk about sport and activity, but not really about wellness. For example, I no longer have a desire to work out on a treadmill, but I could be teased into a spa. While I'm there, I might be encouraged to participate in some light exercise, such

as a walk. It's about appealing to individuals. A 'one size fits all' approach is not effective.

David Stalker

Wellness offers the sector a huge opportunity. Pendle Leisure Trust, for example, has created a fantastic wellness facility that's making a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the local community. We need to learn from this example and build on it. I welcome any wellness solution that puts our centres at the hub of the local community.

Q What's the role of the public leisure sector going forward?

Phil Storey, CEO, Pendle Leisure Trust

Chris Holliday

The public sector is there to provide a service, but it's not only for people who can't afford to pay private health club prices. In the public sector, we've faced five years of significant budget cuts, and if we don't take action to encourage more people into our facilities, public sector leisure centres may not exist in the future.

In Walsall, 55 per cent of the adult population participate in absolutely no exercise – we need to encourage these people into our facilities.

David Stalker

Public leisure providers need to move away from a 'one size fits all' approach if they are to tackle wider health issues.

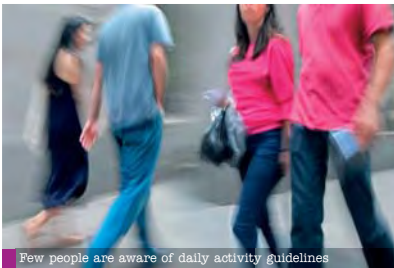
The public sector's role is to identify ways to tap new markets, rather than simply churning current gym members and leisure centre users. At a time when the NHS is struggling to cope with the rising cost of treating conditions that regular exercise could prevent, it seems to me that a 12 per cent market penetration just isn't good enough – the public sector needs to bring in new people.



Pendle's spa: "A significant contribution to wellbeing in the local area"



Competition from budget gyms is 'good for the sector'



Few people are aware of daily activity guidelines

Phil Attwell

In many communities, universities are already the lead provider of leisure facilities and many are expanding their community offering to address local sport, leisure and fitness needs. This activity is likely to impact mid-market public and private sector providers.

Q Do you think the low-cost model is sustainable, and can it create gym membership growth?

Andy Roberts, senior sales consultant, Precor

David Stalker

Inevitably the rapid growth of budget gym chains has created new competition in the market, but the model is also attracting a significant number of first-time users. This is good news for the growth of the sector. To survive, mid-market operators will need to find new ways to differentiate themselves, potentially focusing on delivering exceptional customer service and offering a broader range of activities.

Chris Holliday

I'm not convinced about the long-term future of the budget club model. Many people use our facilities because they enjoy the personal interaction with professional, well-trained staff. The majority of people will not be prepared to compromise on this. If the public sector can build the right facilities with the right staff, people will pay and will not necessarily swap service for a lower price.

Q There are so many bodies representing the fitness industry – is there enough room for them all?

Tracy Copping, CEO, South Suffolk Leisure

Sean Holt

Yes, as they all have their own role to play. CIMSPA, for example, is about raising standards in the workforce, and we are in



Sport England staff can leave the office to play squash or go for a walk

Conversations with DCMS are valuable, but we need to be sitting at the DH table

regular dialogue with other key bodies to ensure we all push in the same direction. Sixty per cent of CIMSPA members are over the age of 45. My challenge is to encourage more young professionals to get involved with the Chartered Institute.

Chris Holliday

There's enough room for all the organisations, but remits need to be clear and they need to work together. Our sector has a lot to offer when it comes to tackling major issues on the political agenda and we have to be united to do this effectively. While conversations with the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) are valuable, sitting at the table with the Department of Health (DH) is where we also need to be.

Q As members of the health and fitness industry, do we need to better practise what we preach?

David Connell, head of business development, Hertfordshire Sports Village

Sean Holt

During my time at Sport England, working with CEO Roger Draper, I was taught the importance of walking the talk. Staff were expected to participate in at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times a week: people could leave the office at any time to play squash or go for a walk. So yes, people should lead by example.

Martin Guyton

Yes, we need to lead by example – but to make this possible, we need to recruit people with a true belief in what they are promoting. Public messages about the benefits of exercise also need to be more visible and have better clarity. I suspect most of the UK population is aware of the 'five a day' fruit and vegetable recommendation, but would guess that significantly fewer people are aware of the daily physical activity recommendations.



Spicy snack's protein hit

New Inkospor Active Protein Chips are protein crisp snacks containing 43 per cent protein and approximately 50 per cent less carbohydrates and fat than regular potato crisps.

The product comes in paprika flavour and is designed for day and evening snacking, during and after training. Ingredients include soy protein isolate, maize meal, vegetable oil, mixed herbs, sugar and antioxidant rosemary extract.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

inkospor



New energy drink from Lucozade

Lucozade by GlaxoSmithKline has launched a new sub-brand called Revive. An energising drink containing B vitamins and only 50 calories per bottle, it's available in three flavours: lemongrass with ginger, orange with acai, and cranberry with acai.

Revive is aimed at consumers aged 25–35 and features vibrant packaging. Revive is available in 380ml singles and 4 x 380ml multi-packs.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

lucozade

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New energy training drink for athletes

For Goodness Shakes has developed Nectar, a new energy drink concentrate designed to let athletes choose a solution to meet their specific training needs.

The 2-litre tank comes with a 25ml dosing pump which, when adding the product to water in measured doses, can deliver a choice of: a hypotonic drink, ideal for fast hydration in light or hot training conditions; an isotonic drink for regular training and racing; or a hypertonic drink for intervals and intensive training sessions.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS

for goodness shakes



Kinetica launches next generation fuel gel

Sports nutrition specialist Kinetica has added a new fuel gel to its product range, scientifically designed to provide athletes with a powerful, sustained performance boost.

The gel incorporates rapidly absorbed carbohydrates and key nutrients to enhance mental alertness and focus, delay physical fatigue and increase athletic

endurance. It also offers essential amino acids – designed to promote muscle recovery – plus a vitamin blend including Vitamins B and E, alongside the carbs and caffeine. Using natural flavours and colouring, the product comes in 24 x 35ml packs.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

kinetica

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The Edge, University of Leeds



Cardiff International Pool



K2, Crawley



The Peak, Stirling Sports Village

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SUPPLIER SHOWCASE

WE PROFILE RECENT PROJECTS FROM CYBEX
INTERNATIONAL UK AND I&I INTERNET

IN RESIDENCE

Supplier CYBEX International UK
Client The Club, Baltimore
Wharf – London, UK

As the largest residential gym in London, The Club at Baltimore has recently opened within the newly built Baltimore Wharf complex in London's Docklands.

Situated just a 10-minute walk from Canary Wharf, Baltimore is the latest project from Ballymore, an award-winning luxury residential property development company. The site, which offers luxury suites and apartments, provides both residents and the local community with full access to The Club – a prestigious gym and leisure facility.

Split across two floors, the gym has been fully equipped with a comprehensive range of cardiovascular and strength training equipment from CYBEX International. The facility houses five 750AT Total Body Arc Trainers, six 750C upright cycles, a Bravo functional trainer and a range of equipment from CYBEX's Eagle series of premium strength equipment.

CYBEX also installed nine treadmills from the 770T range, part of its best-in-class series of cardiovascular equipment. Only recently launched to the UK market, the 770T treadmills have been developed for greater comfort and provide more entertainment options than any other treadmill in the CYBEX range through the 770T-CT – CYBEX's new CardioTouch™ display. The 770T-CT offers a single command centre for every exercise programme and entertainment control. Users



The Club at Baltimore is open to residents and the local community

will be able to set up an exercise programme, charge an iPod or iPhone and scroll through playlists to provide a unique personalised workout experience.

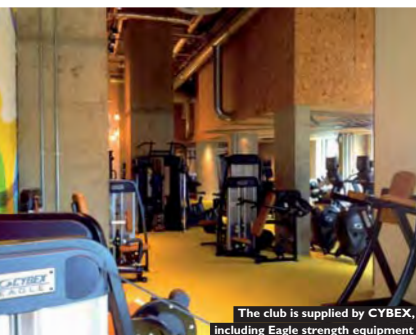
The contract to equip The Club at Baltimore was won by Nuffield Health, a leading provider of medical, wellbeing and fitness services. This installation is the latest in an extensive portfolio of projects on which CYBEX and Nuffield Health have worked in partnership; other projects include the headquarters of Deutsche Bank, as well as high-end supermarket chain Waitrose.

Chris Koffman, director of new business at Nuffield Health, says: "The Club at Baltimore is one of the most exclusive residential fitness facilities in London. The equipment provided by CYBEX not only reflects the high quality, state-of-the-art design of The Club but, through the range of cardio and strength equipment installed, also ensures that users of all fitness abilities and training interests will be able to maximise their workouts on-site."

As CYBEX UK's key account manager, Alan Ellis was responsible for the successful delivery of the installation. He says: "As the largest residential gym in London, The Club at Baltimore will provide an exclusive training facility for not only the occupants of one of the area's most prestigious developments, but also for the local community."

"For CYBEX to be chosen to equip the facility further emphasises the high quality and long-lasting durability of our equipment."

As well as the gym, The Club also includes a 25m swimming pool, basketball court, climbing apparatus, and spa and sauna facilities.



The club is supplied by CYBEX, including Eagle strength equipment

For more information: www.cybexintl.com

WEBSITES DIY-STYLE

Supplier I&I Internet
Client Dream Fitness – London, UK

Dream Fitness, an independent gym in south London, offers a full range of services – from CV and weight training programmes, through nutrition and boot camps, to massage, beauty and hypnotherapy – to help individuals change their lives, and their attitudes to their health and physical appearance, for the better.

When setting up his club, owner Chris Davies knew he would need a good website, but with no IT skills beyond a GCSE in the subject, he didn't know where to start. Based on a recommendation from one of his colleagues, he opted for the I&I MyWebsite site builder product – a website package aimed specifically at helping small businesses such as gyms and health clubs to launch a compelling, effective website within minutes.

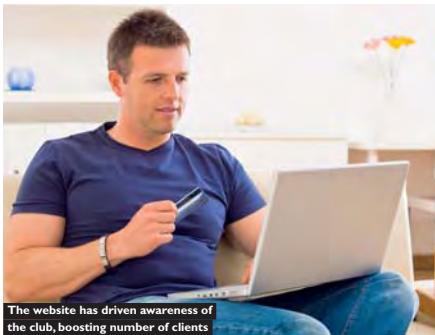
"I knew I needed a website to which I could refer potential clients, to communicate the range of high quality services on offer at the club and thereby grow the business," says Davies.

"However, I'm not a very technical person at all. I just know the really basic stuff, but with the MyWebsite product that was all I needed. The product was really easy to use, with all the templates already in place – I simply had to drop in my own information to set up my own website. The whole process was easy, quick and very simple."

It took a few days to complete the project, with Davies finding a few hours in each busy day to complete each of the pages and research the content to be included, but by the end of the third day he had a comprehensive site – www.dreamfitness.co.uk – ready to launch.

"The finished product is a professional-looking website that meets all my objectives," says Davies. "I've had a number of people compliment the site, and even ask who the web design company was. People are shocked to hear I did it myself because of just how professional it looks."

Although Davies stills meets potential clients face-to-face or through recommendation, the website has already



The website has driven awareness of the club, boosting number of clients

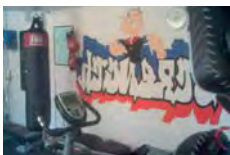
proved to be a useful marketing tool, raising awareness of his business, offering information to prospects and providing an opportunity for people to interact with him. He is confident that bookings through the website will continue to increase.

He continues: "The website is a selling point and allows people to understand what I'm all about. It has definitely led to an increase in clientele."

"Since I initially created the site, I've also found it easy to update sections as needed," he adds.

I&I offers packages from around £10 a month that provide a choice of industry-specific templates and content, such as those for gyms. The packages are designed to be used by any level of computer user and include everything that a gym, club or leisure centre needs to launch online. This includes a range of tools for social media and mobile functionality, as well as features such as feedback forms, relevant image libraries and location, news and weather content, as well as shop functionality.

For more information: www.landl.co.uk



The owner of Dream Fitness, Chris Davies (above centre), created the website himself (left and bottom right), allowing him to communicate the full range of products and services available at his London-based club (above right and bottom centre)



Pulse's retentive module

Pulse has unveiled a new module for its SmartCentre gym management software. Known as the Retention Magnet, it's a tool designed to simply and efficiently identify, interact with and retain gym members. Among other features, it uses powerful reporting tools to manage staff performance and member interaction, with customisable interaction reminders including workout review frequency.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
pulse



Antibacterial mats from Airex AG

Airex has launched a new generation of gym mats said to set new standards in functionality. Rising hygiene standards have been taken into account by using a new, highly effective antibacterial substance. Airex says it even controls the aggressive MRSA strain of bacteria that can be found in fitness facilities. By using new substances, the company has also been able to significantly improve the mats' resistance to ageing indoors, outdoors and in water.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
airex

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the search engine for leisure buyers



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Micro-managing the group cycling experience

Life Fitness has debuted a new group cycling bike called the Lifecycle GX. Built to suit a variety of user types and enable them to experience an ergonomically correct ride, micro fore and aft adjustments permit both seat and handlebar to be positioned in the most comfortable knee-over-pedal position for a specific height and body type, while pop/pin vertical adjustments in increments of 15mm allow users to find the correct height relative to pedal crank. An optional computer provides feedback to users.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORDS
life fitness

Discovering Precor's new strength equipment

The Discovery Line is a new range of plate-loaded strength equipment from fitness supplier Precor. Comprising seven pieces, it's designed for both first-time users and seasoned athletes. The full line is designed with independent arm resistance, and converging and diverging movement paths created to provide a greater range of motion and usage of muscle groups. Each item also features a large, text-free illustrational sign that demonstrates correct form and muscle usage at a glance. A QR code on the sign allows smartphone users to view a 30-second instructional video.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
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Printed by Warners Midland.

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lightweights

'COREGASM' - AN EXTRA WORKOUT BENEFIT!

Anecdotal stories of exercise leading to a female orgasm have been confirmed by researchers at Indiana University in the US. While the phenomenon – sometimes known as 'coregasm' due to an association with core abdominal work – isn't new, this is the first study of its kind to look into it.

Online surveys were sent to 370 women who had reported exercise-induced orgasms (EIO) or exercise-induced sexual pleasure (EISP). Forty per cent of those who had experienced EIO or EISP had done so on more than 10 occasions, and those reporting EIO were not fantasising sexually or thinking about people they found attractive.

Various types of activity were associated with EIO and EISP, including weight lifting (26.5 per cent), yoga (20 per cent), cycling (15.8 per cent), running (13.2 per cent) and walking/hiking (9.6 per cent). However, abdominal exercise came out top: 51.4 per cent of the EIO group had had an orgasm linked to ab work in the previous 90 days.



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WATERCRESS MAY HELP WORKOUT RECOVERY



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Eating small amounts of watercress daily could help alleviate stress put on the body after a vigorous gym workout, say Scottish scientists.

Researchers from Napier University and Ulster University found that, while high-intensity exercise can create a build-up of free radicals which may damage DNA, watercress can help raise levels of antioxidants to protect our bodies.

The eight-week study was based on 10 men who ate 85 grams of watercress and went through a high-intensity treadmill workout. They had less damage to their DNA compared to a control group.



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HUNGER GAMES WORKOUT HITS US

More than 36 million copies of the *The Hunger Games* trilogy have sold worldwide and a film adaptation was released in March.

On the back of this, New York Sports Clubs has launched the Train Like a Tribute workout. In the books, teenagers – or 'tributes' of a post-apocalyptic world – fight to the death in gladiatorial combat. In reality, the small group classes use vigorous cardio and weights-based exercises to mimic skills used in the books: archery, tree climbing, speed work and strength training.

Created by master trainer Eric Salvador, a former US marine, the class is 'won' by the person who completes the most circuits. Details: www.mysportsclubs.com

lunchtime dance class trend

Across cities in Sweden, workers are swapping sandwiches for swinging moves in the Lunch Beat craze.

Held for just an hour – 12 noon til 1pm – the organised events see employees bopping away in an attempt to increase their productivity in the afternoon.

And they're growing in popularity. Lunch Beat, a not-for-profit organisation, was founded by Molly Range in Stockholm in June 2010, when

just 14 people attended the event. But what started as an underground movement began to capture people's attention as the clubs were given local, then international, media airtime – including on BBC *World* and *Oprah*.

Today, the monthly Stockholm Lunch Beat events attract over 600 people and there are now 25 international branches. The concept is free to copy and improve. Details: www.lunchbeat.org

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