

health club management

MARCH 2016

No 233

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A tipping point for health

We're in the thick of a healthy living revolution and are reaching a tipping point, where the positive steps forward are starting to outweigh the backward steps and the missed opportunities. Exciting times indeed

It's been a rollercoaster ride for the UK health and activity sector, with a succession of major announcements being made which will impact the future direction of the industry, as well as setting priorities and opening up opportunities.

We had a high in December, with the publication of the government's excellent *Sporting Future* strategy, which has set a new agenda for physical activity. In this issue, we talk to Sport England CEO Jennie Price about how we can get involved with, and support, this once-in-a-generation strategy (see p30).

The triumph of *Sporting Future* was followed by a major low on 26 February, when the government announced the publication of its eagerly-awaited Child Obesity Strategy – originally scheduled for December – had been delayed for the third time. It will not now be published until the summer, with no date announced.

These repeated delays are being interpreted by analysts as an indication of behind-the-scenes wrangling with the food lobby over a proposed sugar tax. Insiders say it's looking less likely the strategy will include either a sugar tax or any reference to physical activity, as this is deemed to have been 'taken care of' by *Sporting Future*.

To be fair, *Sporting Future* is an epic piece of work and will get the sport and activity sector on track, with huge momentum behind it for a decade. However – given we're aiming for joined-up government – not linking the Childhood Obesity Strategy with both a sugar tax and activity just doesn't make any sense.

What's the logic of creating the best sport and activity strategy we've ever had and then following it up with a childhood obesity strategy that doesn't include exercise and still leaves children vulnerable to the predatory activity of soft drinks companies? Governments are responsible for sorting out things like this.

Nearly 30 per cent of kids are now obese, and experts agree immediate and urgent action is needed to tackle the problem at every level if we're to avoid ruining the health of a generation.

If the government thinks it can bury this report by delaying publication, it will be surprised at the depth of feeling on this issue – campaigners are not going to let this drop, and rightly so.



Creating healthy cities is the key to a healthy future for humankind – we need to live in environments that are geared to prevention and positive choices

The next high point came on 1 March when the government announced plans for the nation's first tranche of Healthy New Towns – 10 new settlements will be built with health and wellbeing at their heart – and if the fiasco over the Childhood Obesity Strategy is a low point, then *Sporting Future* and the Healthy New Towns initiative are most definitely major highs.

Expressions of interest in the Healthy New Towns programme were invited last summer and attracted 114 applications. The plan is to create environments that make it easier for people to live healthy lifestyles, and where policymakers will be able to "explore and test creative solutions for 21st century healthcare challenges". Around 76,000 homes will be built for 170,000 residents and designed to focus on preventative healthcare, while tackling obesity and dementia and improving community cohesion.

Public health officials have been saying for years that no big wins can be made in the fight for better health until people live in environments where they can develop good lifestyle habits. It's exciting to see this coming to fruition at a national level.

We know 95 per cent of disease is lifestyle-related and health has to be earned every minute of every day. Creating healthy cities is the key to a healthy future for humankind – we need to live in environments geared to prevention and positive choices.

Liz Terry

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PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM McSHANE

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Sport England CEO Jennie Price on the coming together of sport and fitness

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Jessica Ennis-Hill was one of the sportpeople recognised in the recent British Ethnic Diversity Sports Awards 2016

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EuropeActive breaks silence in heated debate over IHRSA's new office in Brussels



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Write to reply

Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry?

If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: healthclub@leisuremedia.com

IHRSA Europe office 'damaging to sector'

Based on my near 10 years of service in representing this sector and over 25 years working in it, I read with disappointment that IHRSA has announced plans to open an office in Brussels.

First, the move is an unnecessary duplication of the role played by EuropeActive in furthering the sector's cause in Brussels. Secondly, the sector has limited bandwidth in which to be heard in Brussels; its chances of being well received are best served by the message being delivered by the representative body of the European sector with a unifying mission of representing the whole sector, not marginalising it through focusing on negative in-fighting between commercial and non-commercial providers which has been the mainstay of IHRSA in the United States.

Thirdly, the announcement is plainly misleading. While I hope accidental, I suspect that recruiting a management agency (MCI) which serves a variety of sectors and positioning it as a strategic investment in dedicated IHRSA employees has been deliberately portrayed and is totally misleading to the sector. My hunch is that this is a net saving on the previous operating expenditure in Europe, disguised as a strategic investment, with more profit returning to the US as a result. The European industry is not stupid and it will see through this.

The bottom line is that Europe is now a bigger market than the US. It therefore deserves to be served by a body that's dedicated to its cause, not one that sees the continent of Europe solely as a market for expansion.

Time and time again, IHRSA shows itself to be as globally minded as the World Series of Baseball.

I wonder, too, whether the IHRSA Board was fully aware of this decision, or its consequences. I hope so, because this is definitely a strategic decision that should be ratified by the Board, and particularly its European representatives.

We've seen international sporting bodies such as FIFA and IAAF in the spotlight for serious reform. I believe our sector also now needs that at the global level.

David Stalker
Chair, UKactive
Membership Council
& NED

IHRSA: 'Better serving needs of European members'

In the months prior to the departure of IHRSA's European director, Hans Muench, we looked at different options for serving our membership, which comprises commercial health club operators and owners as well as companies that supply products and services.

It was clear the job had become bigger than one person could handle. We needed more help at an operational level. We determined that we needed additional infrastructure in Europe to better serve the needs of our current membership, as well as to continue to grow membership. We needed more multi-lingual team members with a diverse range of skills.

To that end, we chose to work with MCI, an experienced association management company that works with more than 100 associations worldwide. Leading the team are Jeroen van Liempd as IHRSA Europe director and Angela Meurer as IHRSA Europe general manager. They and their team will serve as an extension of the IHRSA staff in developing and carrying out our operational plan.

The full IHRSA Europe team is listed at ihrsa.org/europe

In addition to the new team in Brussels, we will continue to work with an extensive network of partners, federations and ambassadors in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom and Russia to engage members and grow membership.

We will still collaborate with organisations that serve the broader fitness industry wherever it's beneficial to the organisations involved, as well as the industry as a whole. For example, IHRSA is a sponsor of the 2016 European Market Research Report being compiled by Deloitte on behalf of EuropeActive.

Overall, response from our membership to the opening of the new office has been enthusiastic. IHRSA is confident that this new increased level of support in Europe will be beneficial to the entire industry.

Cathy McNeil
VP marketing & international
operations, IHRSA



Stalker is sceptical of IHRSA's new opening



IHRSA Europe director Jeroen van Liempd (above left) and general manager Angela Meurer (above right)

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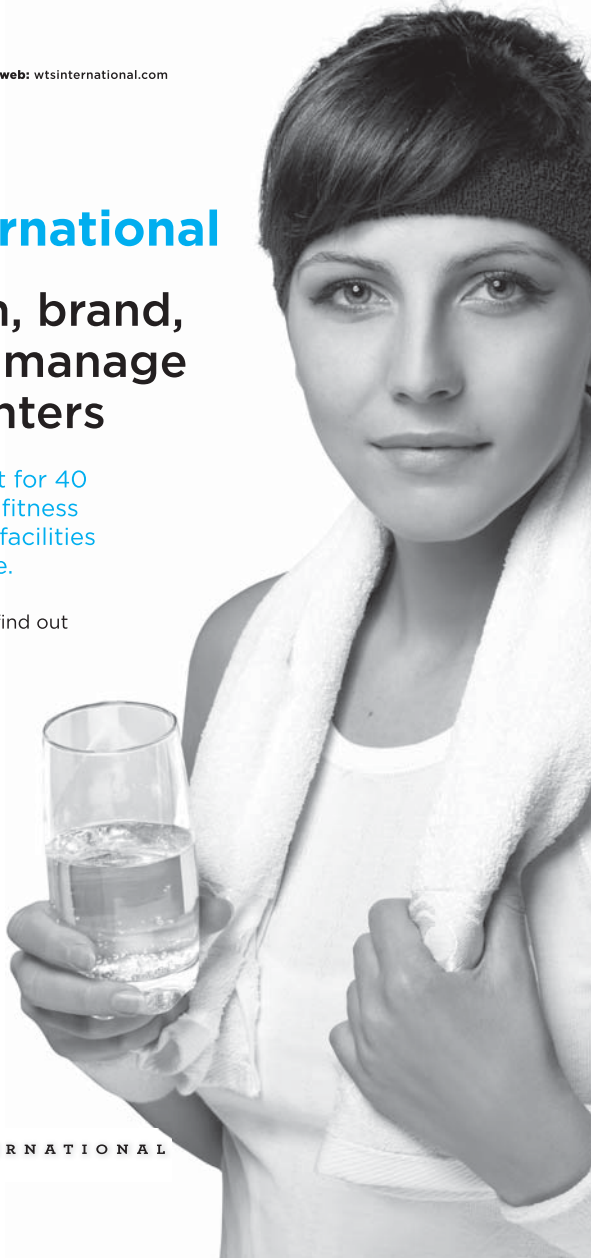
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► New Code of Practice called into question

We're writing to add our voice to the growing list of people and organisations expressing concerns over the PAS 520 guidelines published by the BSI (British Standard Institution) last November, which are designed to safeguard children up to age four within the teaching of swimming.

We fully support the promotion of standards in the sector, but any standards need to be practical and acknowledge that the sector is multi-faceted. The enforcement of these guidelines would, we believe, result in the closure of a number of smaller swim schools.

We're working closely with the STA and Birthlight in our response to the BSI guidelines. Like us, both organisations fully support the development of standards, but the STA agrees that there are "several points that are unnecessary and impracticable for all types of swim school operations".

Our main areas of concern relate to the following:

- The suggestion that an additional Level 2 swimming qualification is introduced. Our baby and pre-school teachers are all already Level 2 qualified through the STA, and also undergo extensive training with us. We don't believe they also need a generic swimming qualification on top of this.
- The section of the PAS document that covers the safeguarding of children is not specific enough and needs to include more guidance for swimming teachers and swim school owners regarding their specific roles and responsibilities.
- The guidelines recommend excessive levels of public liability and professional indemnity insurance which we, and our advisors, deem unnecessary.
- Unrealistic and unnecessary recommendations that children wear a double nappy system up to the age of four.

Ali Beckman
Technical director,
Puddle Ducks



National Living Wage can help drive standards of care

Invest in staff to future-proof the sector

I was interested to read your recent feature about the National Living Wage (see HCM Jan 16, p32).

It's essential that the health and fitness industry is seen to offer skilled careers with clear progression and professional status if it is to attract and retain high calibre individuals. You could argue that today's fitness professionals are not only responsible for the health of their individual clients, but at a much wider level they can influence the health and wellbeing of their community. Quite literally, the health of the nation is in their hands.

The changes in government policy to increase the minimum wage – the new Living Wage – should therefore be viewed as a positive step towards raising standards in our sector's workforce, supporting the work that CIMSPA is already doing. It will add to the integrity and reputation of the fitness industry.

While some health and fitness operators may decide to pass on these costs by increasing their membership fees, I hope that many will recognise the long-term value of investing in well-trained, skilled and knowledgeable staff.

Through continuous quality training and upskilling of staff, operators will be in a better position to offer more services. This could increase revenue and ultimately attract more members to enjoy these improved customer services, thus reducing the impact of the increased Living Wage.

Rob Johnson
Managing director, Future Fit Training



Will the new guidelines cause swim schools to close?

PEOPLE

The NHS and government are desperate for evidence that shows exercise can impact health. We hope to provide this

PROFESSOR STEVE HAAKE, DIRECTOR OF THE ADVANCED WELLBEING RESEARCH CENTRE, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY, UK



Since 2000, and especially in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, the Sports Engineering and Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University has worked with UK Sport to provide technology solutions to help Team GB win more medals. We have two criteria: offer value for money and influence gold medals.

One of the particular success stories for London 2012 was boxing. iBoxer was created to suck in data from a number of different sources: tournament statistics, statistics from the International Amateur Boxing Association, boxers' weights, heights and judges' scores, cameras from the gym, YouTube and DVDs. This is all stored in one place, giving coaches and boxers easy access to watch fights and to help piece together a picture of the opponent and develop a plan. Prior to installation, the boxers had a 50/50 chance of winning a bout; afterwards, it was 75/25. We know it's been successful because our funding has been increased for Rio.

However, it's not just elite athletes who are set to benefit from our expertise. Sheffield aims to be the most active city in the UK by 2020, and we're supporting this with an app-based approach called Move More, built by colleagues at the University of Sheffield. A framework will be developed around Move More, looking at how people can be encouraged to be more active in every aspect of their lives – not just their leisure time, but at home, on their commute and at work/school. One of the things this will involve will be competitions in schools and companies around the number of steps walked.

The NHS and the government are desperate for evidence that shows exercise can impact health. We hope to provide this at the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre. Set to open in early 2018, on the site of the former Don Valley Stadium, this will be a hothouse involving everyone who promotes wellness: psychologists,

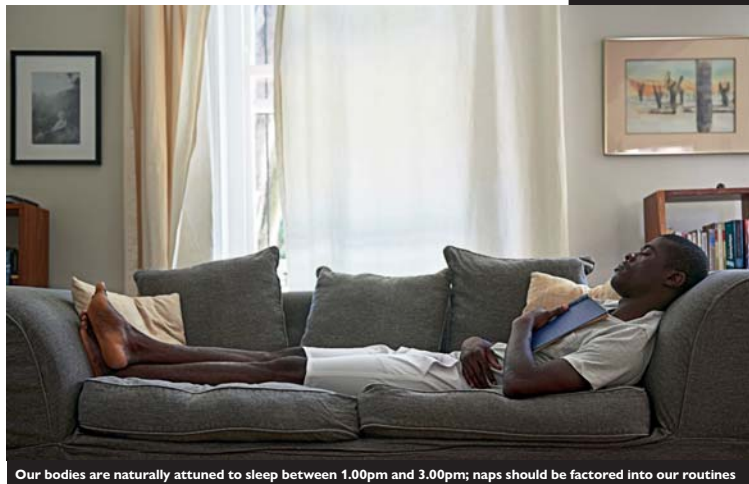


iBoxer is an advanced collection of data that enables coaches and boxers to study their opponents

healthcare economists and engineers. We'll be looking to come up with technological innovations to get people moving using gadgets, equipment and installations.

Diabetes, and its co-morbidities, costs Sheffield millions of pounds every year. If we could have just 1 per cent of that money to invest in getting people more physically active, that would be a lot of funding.

We need leisure providers to get involved with getting everyone more active, but they will have to think outside of the box, finding ways of engaging with new customers rather than just fighting for the same ones.



Our bodies are naturally attuned to sleep between 1.00pm and 3.00pm; naps should be factored into our routines

Most people rarely experience a personal best because they're not getting adequate mental and physical recovery

NICK LITTLEHALES, ELITE SPORT SLEEP COACH, SPORT SLEEP COACH UK



For decades, we haven't been approaching sleep in the right way, taking it for granted and mostly getting away with it. However, nowadays there are many lifestyle and occupational practices exacerbating this problem, including increased exposure to artificial light and being plugged into technology.

We're now reaching a

tipping point whereby sleep deprivation is leading to a rapid rise in associated side-effects and disorders, not to mention a dependency on caffeine and sleeping tablets. This is a one-way street to burnout.

Whenever I ask clients how much sleep they need, they say eight hours. But after more than 30 years in the sleep industry, and 16 dedicated to elite sport, I've rarely worked with anyone who achieves that. Most push on through life, rarely experiencing a personal best in any area of life because they're not getting adequate mental and physical recovery from the hours allocated to sleep.

In the world of elite sport, I've been redefining the importance of sleep to overall sports performance,

with clients including British Cycling and the ParaCycling Olympic teams, the Sky Pro Cycling team, leading Premiership and international football teams and Premiership rugby union and Super League Clubs.

The key factors I address as part of my Sleep Recovery Programme involve re-synching an athlete with the circadian rhythms: the physical, mental and behavioural changes their bodies follow during any 24-hour cycle, triggered by light, dark and temperature changes. Understanding their chronotype – are they a morning or night person – and designing their training schedules accordingly can be a game changer.

We're naturally attuned to take advantage of three sleep periods every day: nocturnal, between 1.00pm and 3.00pm, and around 5.00pm–7.00pm. I recommend people sleep in shorter cycles rather than blocks of hours, and that naps are factored into every routine.

In addition, re-establishing pre and post sleep routines – for example tech shut-down, mental download, moving from light to dark and warm to cool – have never been more important to help enter a natural sleep state.

Health clubs and their members would clearly benefit from raising sleep recovery awareness in a redefined way that's more attuned to today's lifestyles, combining simple, practical and achievable techniques. ▶



Macmillan wants to work with the fitness sector to bring about a mindset change towards exercise and cancer

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Being physically active may reduce the relative risk of disease progression, and even death for some cancers

JO FOSTER, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME LEAD, MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT, UK



Cancer prevalence is increasing: between 2015 and 2030, six million people will have a diagnosis of cancer in the UK. Improved treatment outcomes mean many people are living longer, but they're not necessarily living well.

The good news is that being physically active can help improve both clinical and

quality of life outcomes at every stage of a cancer journey, whether that's at diagnosis, during or after treatment – including for those with advanced or incurable cancers.

Being physically active can help prevent or manage some of the consequences of treatment – including cancer-related fatigue, depression, heart damage and bone thinning – as well as helping prevent or manage co-morbidities including type 2 diabetes and heart disease. There's also emerging evidence that being physically active may reduce the relative risk of disease progression, and even death for some cancers.

Macmillan's insight research into the barriers and motivators around becoming and staying active for people living with, and beyond, cancer are four-fold. Firstly individual: whether the person believes they can do it, whether they've been active in the past, and their emotional wellbeing. Secondly, their social support networks: whether their family, friends and colleagues are supportive. Thirdly, whether they have physical consequences of their treatment or co-morbidities, such as loss of balance or bowel incontinence. Finally, the physical environment in which they live and work.

If people have strong personal self-efficacy, and supportive friends and family, they're much more likely to be able to overcome physical consequences and environmental barriers than if they have low self-efficacy and unsupportive friends and family.

Interestingly, though, our insight shows a healthcare professional can cut across all of these barriers and increase the likelihood that someone will change their behaviour, no matter what their barriers.

Macmillan is therefore working in partnerships across the UK to create a 12-month behavioural change support service. This begins in clinical care settings and refers into the behaviour change support service, usually offered within the local community.

We'd welcome engagement from the health and fitness industry to help bring about a cultural and mindset change, and we're encouraging the industry to move away from six- to 12-week exercise programmes towards a longer-term, more person-centred behaviour change approach.

In order to work with this market, fitness instructors and PTs need to have the Level 4 Cancer Rehabilitation qualification and be trained in behaviour change techniques and motivational interviewing. ●

WANT TO HEAR MORE?

Jo Foster, Nick Littlehales and professor Steve Haake will

be among the speakers at Elevate, which takes place at London Olympia on 4–5 May 2016. Attendance is free of charge, with tickets offered on a first come, first served basis.

Register online at www.elevatearena.com where you can also see the full speaker line-up and programme.

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International news

IHRSA launches new European office

IHRSA has opened a new office in Brussels in a move intended to "engage, serve and grow" its European membership. It will be led by Jeroen van Liempd, IHRSA Europe director, and Angela Meurer, IHRSA Europe general manager who together will replace outgoing Europe director Hans Muench. "Our new team will greatly increase our ability to reach out to more European countries, as well as better serve our existing membership," said Alison O'Kane Giannaras, IHRSA associate VP of international development.

However, former UK active CEO Dave Stalker has criticised the move, saying it's an unnecessary duplication of EuropeActive's role (see p9).
Details: http://lei.sr?o=y3K4w_H

Edinburgh consultancy expands overseas

GYMetrix, which uses wireless technology to measure gym equipment usage, is expanding overseas.

Having recently completed projects in the US for Healthworks and Gymfit, GYMetrix has secured a contract to work with low-cost Spanish operator Viva Gym. Viva Gym has 60,000 members across its 16 sites in Spain, and has asked GYMetrix to assess its new-build gym model. This will inform its roll-out over the next five years.

"It's great to see more operators using hard data and facts to determine what their members want, rather than relying on guesswork or what equipment reps tell them," says GYMetrix founder Rory McGown.
Details: http://lei.sr?o=q7y2p_H



GYMetrix founder Rory McGown

Texas bouldering gym opens doors

The world's largest bouldering gym has opened in Austin, Texas. Designed by DJA Architects, the 50,000sq ft Austin Bouldering Project features 23,000sq ft of climbable surfaces, with layouts that can be configured into 250 different set-ups.

A variety of sizes and shapes of wooden climbing walls are available, which will be rotated on a regular basis.

The development is part of a larger building that's being redeveloped into a

community destination with restaurants, breweries, a fitness centre and yoga studio.

"We tried to push the boundaries with everything," says general manager Zach Olschwanger. "We wanted a really open layout with a flow that directed you around the entire facility, never getting cut off by a wall. We've also designed our climbing walls differently from almost every other climbing gym."

Details: <http://lei.sr?o=U7E7k>



The Austin Bouldering Project keeps things fresh by rotating the walls

Nike HQ adds sports facilities

Sports giant Nike is expanding its HQ in Oregon, US, with the addition of sporting facilities, mixed-use space and new offices. The architecture of the expansion is inspired by human movement, speed, plus the strength and energy of competition.

A large beacon serves as the centrepiece of the new campus, featuring a sculpture of Nike's namesake – the winged Greek goddess of victory.

Open green spaces, paths, sports courts and fields will be added to link the existing parts of the headquarters, which opened in 1990, to "promote movement and encourage fluid teamwork through inventive, flexible spaces".

Many of the buildings will be extended to blend into the landscape and incorporate new sustainable elements – including natural daylight, a grey water treatment centre and a radiant convection system for heating and cooling – as Nike pursues LEED Platinum Certification.

US firms ZGF Architects, SRG Partnership and Skylab Architecture will guide the design, while Portland practice Place Studio will develop the landscape architecture.

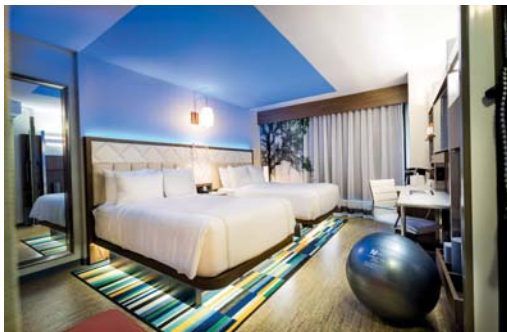
"Every day at Nike, we dream up new ways to inspire athletes to expand their potential," said Mark Parker, president and chief executive of Nike. "To do that, we relentlessly evolve how we inspire our own teams and design environments that foster chemistry and collaboration."

"Breakthrough products are designed and developed for the world's best athletes. This stems from a constant drive to imagine, invent and deliver the future of sport – a mission facilitated by workspaces that support rapid iteration and creation through collaboration."

The building work is estimated to be completed by 2018. The project cost has yet to be revealed.

Details: http://lei.sr?o=A6S8Q_H

IHG embraces wellness with Even



Exercise balls and yoga mats are part of the furniture at Even Hotels

Even Hotels, the wellness brand of the Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG), has just opened its third hotel and has plans for three more locations this year: two in New York and one in Omaha. Further sites in Miami, Texas and Phoenix are on the cards for the next two to three years.

Jason Moskale, IHG's vice president of lifestyle brands, says the Even model is focused on four pillars of wellness: nutrition, fitness, overall wellbeing and productivity.

Even's philosophy is about allowing guests to experience wellness on their own terms. All the hotels feature state-of-the-art fitness

centres and gyms and also have in-room training zones, which include a foam roller, yoga mat, yoga block, core exercise ball and the Even Hotels Trainer: a mounted fitness wall which includes resistance bands.

The brand has also developed 19 fitness videos and an in-room training guide which shows guests different ways to use the equipment. Group cycling, yoga classes and morning runs along the Hudson River are also offered in New York.

Business travellers are said to be a key component of the brand's success.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=8H3C5_H

GoodLife Fitness rolls out low-cost estate

Canadian operator GoodLife Fitness is on target to reach its goal of 100 low-cost clubs open by the spring.

The company – which has more than 250 GoodLife Fitness and Énergie Cardio clubs in Canada (the latter being in Quebec only) – launched the Fit4Less and Éconofitness (Quebec) chains in 2011.

The low-cost clubs – which are open 24 hours a day – offer strength training equipment, free weights and cardio equipment, as well as a 30-minute express circuit.

GoodLife is now setting its sights on more than 500 low-cost clubs across Canada in the coming years.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Z86j_H

FFME launches new XFit studio in Dubai

Fitness First Middle East (FFME) opened its latest XFit studio – the operator's own CrossFit-style offering – in Dubai in January 2016.

A purpose-built high-intensity training studio, it has been fitted out to allow for functional and cardiovascular conditioning, gymnastic development, Olympic weight-lifting and high-intensity resistance exercise – all in a bid to help users achieve maximum fitness and endurance in the minimum timeframe. MYZONE is also used for feedback.

"XFit is a unique innovation at Fitness First and we wanted to take this experience to another level, making it easily accessible to a wider consumer base," says Fitness First Middle East chief operating officer George Flook. Details: http://lei.sr?a=R8B6j_H



Dubai is home to the latest XFit studio

Life Time launching NYC Sky club

Life Time is gearing up to open a health and fitness club in Manhattan's largest residential tower.

Designed by Goldstein Hill & West, with interiors created by David Rockwell's studio – the Rockwell Group – the Life Time Athletic at Sky will feature a multi-level gym, a Turkish-style hammam and Lifespa, an indoor cycling studio, a full-size basketball court, yoga and pilates facilities, an indoor water club, two outdoor infinity pools, a health food café and a Skypark created by urban designer Thomas Balsley.

"Every inch of the club space exudes luxury and attention to detail, from the



Life Time Athletic at Sky will exude luxury

cloud pattern mosaic tiled outdoor pools to the LED ceiling lights in the water club, reminiscent of a water droplet ripple," said project developers Moinian Group.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Fqz6V>

#LoveYourSelfie project aims to boost body image

énergie Group is aiming to promote healthy lifestyles and positive body image through the launch of a new national social media campaign called #LoveYourSelfie.

Being run across énergie's portfolio of 90 health clubs, the campaign encourages people of all shapes and sizes to love and celebrate their body by sharing a selfie on social media of the part of their body they love the most with a heart drawn on it, using the campaign hashtag.

énergie chair and CEO Jan Spaticchia has high hopes for the online campaign.

"When we launched National Fitness Day within the énergie estate, our vision was to make this a nationally celebrated day, which now, under ukactive's fantastic stewardship it has become," said Spaticchia.

"We are now adopting the same approach with the #LoveYourSelfie campaign, starting small this year before growing the campaign year on year."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=z5Tj_LH

BGF takes Xercise4Less investment up to £20m



Xercise4Less CEO Jon Wright

Xercise4Less has secured a new £7.6m funding round from its equity partner the Business Growth Fund (BGF), taking its total investment in the chain to £19.7m.

BGF, which holds a minority stake in Xercise4Less, first invested in the chain in 2013 and has now pledged further funds to help finance the company's expansion.

Having last year been named among the 20 fastest growing private firms in the UK, Xercise4Less saw sales grow to £21.9m in the 12 months to July 2015, up from £12m in its previous financial year.

The low-cost operator has 35 gyms across the UK and CEO Jon Wright has set out plans to open a further 15 to 20 gyms in the next 12 months.

"Xercise4Less is an example of how an ambitious company can disrupt an established model," said BGF's Richard Taylor, who sits on the gym chain's board. Details: http://lei.sr?a=x5Sj_H

'Huge potential' for budget clubs

The founder and CEO of The Gym Group believes the UK's budget gym sector still holds significant growth potential, despite a boom in new openings in recent years.

John Trehanne – whose chain has been a preminent player in the low cost market along with Pure Gym – says there are an estimated 350 budget gyms currently operating in the UK, and independent research suggests that there's capacity for around three times that figure.

"All the research we've done on the low cost market indicates there's room for 1,000 low cost gyms," Trehanne told HCM.

"Like their airline counterparts, low-cost gyms serve to widen the market by opening up fitness memberships to more people. So given that the market is constantly expanding – around one third of our members have never joined a gym before – there's lots more potential in the low-cost market."

Following its high-profile IPO in November, Trehanne is eager to carry forward the chain's momentum. The Gym Group expects to add 15-20 gyms to its 74-strong portfolio during 2016, with the chain focused solely on quality over quantity. Details: http://lei.sr?a=z5Tj_LH



John Trehanne and his top team in London on the day of The Gym Group's IPO

Fitness First shuts down BEAT

Fitness First has quietly pulled down the shutters on its BEAT microgym in Charing Cross, just weeks after the global gym chain sold its founding site in Bournemouth.

BEAT, which opened to much fanfare in March 2014, was a heart-rate focused studio launched in response to the growing popularity of boutique studios among London gym-goers. The club closed at the end of January, with BEAT sessions now offered instead in Fitness First's nearby club on the Strand.

A spokesperson told HCM that Fitness First is considering its options for the site of the closed BEAT club and is currently in discussions with landlords. Fitness First owner



BEAT offered a variety of heart rate training sessions

Oaktree is understood to have put the chain's UK arm up for sale and despite the recent closures, the spokesperson was unable to say whether further sites are due to shut shortly. Details: http://lei.sr?a=g7N4c_H

Third Space targets top billing



Third Space: Central to the chain's fitness offering is high-calibre group exercise

Third Space CEO Colin Waggett has laid out ambitions for his new health club chain to become the standard bearer in London's "embryonic" premium health club sector.

The former Fitness First and Psycle chief said that despite the recent boom of boutique studios, there is still huge potential at the premium end of London's fitness market.

"Boutique is a word which is banded around a lot, but just because a gym only does one thing doesn't necessarily make it boutique," Waggett told *HCM*. "I actually think it's a very exciting time as there aren't many operators offering a premium club experience. For me, the top end of the

market in London is still very embryonic and this presents a great opportunity for us."

Having recently relaunched Third Space Tower Bridge – formerly 37 Degrees – the chain is currently working with designers Sparstudio and Goldstein Ween Architects to refurbish the entire Third Space estate, which includes clubs in Soho, Marylebone and the Reebok Sports Club in Canary Wharf.

The group is also launching its boutique club offshoot Another Space in Covent Garden next month. It features three studios offering group cycling, yoga and HIIT, with plans for up to five such sites by 2019.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Rzh8s_H

easyGym owners 'lining up sale' of low-cost chain



easyGym has seven sites in London

Low-cost health club chain easyGym is reportedly being prepared for a sale.

According to reports, investment bank Houlihan Lokey has been appointed to oversee a sale of the 14-site gym later this year. The chain's main shareholders include its management, private equity firm Argosy Capital and Middle Eastern investment vehicle Fit & Healthy Holdings.

easyGym boasts an enviable property footprint in London, with half of its gyms there including a flagship on Oxford Street. Details: http://lei.sr?a=Z6n3Q_H

Frame founders target new sites outside capital



Founders Joan Murphy (L) and Pip Black

Female-focused fitness chain Frame is looking at sites outside of London as it seeks to kickstart an expansion plan.

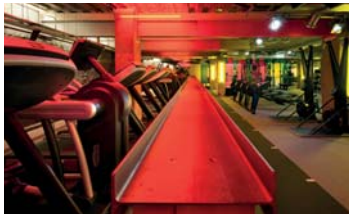
The company, which launched its third site in King's Cross late last year, is exploring locations in several trendy UK cities in a bid to export boutique fitness beyond the capital. London has been a hotbed of boutique fitness growth in recent years and several of the city's concepts are now looking at expansion further afield. The chain is also due to open a new London Victoria site in April. Details: http://lei.sr?a=gN5gs_H

Gymbox readies London rollout

Hip London fitness chain Gymbox is planning to significantly grow its presence across the capital this year, with plans for four new locations.

February saw the launch of Gymbox Victoria – the chain's eighth site and its first south of the Thames – and Gymbox brand and product director David Cooper has told *HCM* that a further three sites are in the pipeline for 2016. He said one site would be in Chancery Lane, another would be south of the river, while a third location is due expected to be revealed shortly.

Cooper said the strong pre-sale for the Victoria site – which saw 1,600 memberships



The gym floor of the 14,000sq ft Victoria Gymbox club

(out of a 2,000 capacity) already sold by the launch date – holds Gymbox in good stead for its forthcoming rollout. He added the chain remains open to all option, including boutique offerings if the right site comes up. Details: http://lei.sr?a=G6T6E_H

Leisure budgets 'at risk' from funding shortfalls

The Local Government Association (LGA) has cautioned that councils will have to continue to divert money from local services, such as leisure budgets, in order to plug growing social care funding gaps.

The association says that planned council tax rises of up to 4 per cent will not be enough to offset the 28 per cent (£2.7bn) reduction in core government funding to councils for 2016/17, due to the added expense to councils of the forthcoming National Living Wage which starts in April.

As a result, it says that social care shortfalls will continue, meaning councils will have to carry on reallocating money from other local services – including maintaining our parks and green spaces and running children's centres, leisure centres and libraries – to cover the gap.

The LGA has previously warned that 'non-essential' services such as leisure are at particular risk from government cutbacks.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=N5G9g_H

BH Live snaps up former Virgin Active location



BH Live CEO Peter Gunn at the site

Leisure operator BH Live has made another high-profile acquisition, snapping up East Dorset's former Virgin Active site.

The operator will spend £1m on repairs and improvements to the club, which has been unoccupied for nearly two years since Virgin Active shuttered the club in February 2014. BH Live has struck a deal with the site's landlord – commercial aspects of which have not been disclosed – and will re-open the site this summer as BH Live Active, Corfe Mullen.

The acquisition of the former Virgin Active site follows just weeks after BH Live secured Fitness First's Queen's Park health club in Bournemouth – the site on which the gym chain's 360-club global empire was founded. BH Live CEO Peter Gunn said the new clubs are part of the operator's ongoing strategy to increase the quality of regional activity centres.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=H9nqz_H

Pure enters boutique market

Pure Gym has tapped into London's booming boutique market with the launch of a high-end indoor cycling studio in Moorgate.

The UK's biggest gym chain has enlisted six-time Olympic Gold medal winner Sir Chris Hoy to formulate the new Pure Ride concept. Hoy, who is a Pure Gym investor and advisor, has had significant input in creating a new high-intensity performance training programme for the site.

Situated two minutes from Moorgate Station, Pure Ride will offer up to 60 indoor cycling classes a week. The 45-minute classes will be split into two studios, with one

delivering Hoy's programme and the other room offering themed workout routines set to high energy dance music.

The strategic move – which comes in the same week that it emerged the company is considering a potential £50m IPO – sees Pure Gym well-positioned in both ends of the gym market which are currently experiencing growth: budget and boutique studios. The company told HCM there is potential for further Pure Ride sites in London and possibly other cities over time, although no concrete plans are in place.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=N5V6g_H



Sir Chris Hoy – who helped devise the concept – is a Pure Gym investor and advisor

New £10m Glasgow club for DLL

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has continued its expansion drive with the announcement of a new £10m health club at Rouken Glen in Glasgow.

Due to open in August 2016 next to Rouken Glen Park, the new site will be DLL's 94th club and its third in Glasgow. It follows the official launch last month of the £9.3m DLL Newbury and announcement of a new club in Colchester (opening Autumn 2016), as the gym chain kicks on after its recent £35m sale and leaseback deal with M&G Investments.

Construction company Pelikaan has already started work on the new 52,765sq ft club, which will feature tennis and sports facilities, an extensive fitness area with three indoor



The new club is situated next to Rouken Glen Park

exercise studios, plus an 18-hole golf course. There will also be indoor/outdoor swimming pools, an indoor spa and spa garden, plus a dedicated zone for children's activities.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=p4hz2_H

health sport activity



“Working together for a brighter future”



Independent news

Heartcore studio opens in former London church



The site offers pilates, TRX and barre

Boutique fitness chain Heartcore has launched its eighth studio in St John's Wood as the operator continues its focus on prestigious London postcodes.

Heartcore founder and celebrity trainer Jess Schuring says the latest site – which follows last year's openings in the City and Mayfair – has been launched in response to demand from local residents.

"We have so many amazing clients living in the area already and they've been asking us to open here for years," said Schuring. "I knew right away this property would be special and it feels that way already. The classes are buzzing and the warm welcome we've received here has absolutely blown me away."

Sited in a former church, the new location has a heavy emphasis on design and was created in-house by Heartcore. Details: http://lei.sr?a=E5h8j_H

Bannatyne brings boutique north



Joanne McCue Bannatyne runs a string of CrossFit clubs across the north east

The former wife of Duncan Bannatyne is expanding her own fast-growing fitness empire with the launch of new boutique fitness concepts on Teesside.

Joanne McCue Bannatyne and business partner Lee Howe have invested more than £250,000 in new equipment – predominantly Woodway treadmills to accompany their range of Wattbikes – as part of the launch of new fitness concepts at their WattFitness boutique on Teesside Industrial Estate.

The pair have created two new 'boutique fitness' classes – WattDefine and WattSpin – which have been influenced by the boom in boutique fitness in London and New York.

WattDefine is described as a hardcore fitness class that sees participants burn up to 1,000 calories from 45-minutes of

high-intensity intervals on the treadmill and core strength conditioning using weights. Meanwhile, WattSpin is a rhythm-based 'sweat fest', with participants using light weights for a total body workout on indoor bikes while listening to inspiring music.

"Small boutique fitness units are a new concept in the UK but they are the future of the fitness industry, not the old-style health clubs," said McCue. "They're growing quickly in London after sweeping the US market, but you'll find nothing like this anywhere else in the UK, so Teesside is helping to lead the way for the future of fitness in this country."

In addition to WattFitness McCue and Howe run CrossFit clubs in the north-east and now aim to grow the boutique concept. Details: http://lei.sr?a=U3G4y_H

1Rebel eyes more 'on-brand' tie-ups

Rebel's collaboration with hip activewear brand Sweaty Betty is the catalyst for the boutique chain to work with more brands in the booming fitness lifestyle market.

That's according to 1Rebel co-founder James Balfour, who says strategic tie-ups with on-brand partners is an area that the company is eager to continue to explore.

"Aligning ourselves with dynamic fitness brands in apparel and retail is something that we strategically look to do and will be expanding on more and more in the future," Balfour told *Health Club Management*.

"We genuinely want to be working with brands that represent our customer base, because you can see clearly how fitness apparel is absolutely booming right now."

1Rebel's recent tie-up saw the chain's

popular Rumble class being offered for free in UK Sweaty Betty retail stores every Tuesday until 16 February. Meanwhile, the Sweaty Betty website has a dedicated 1Rebel section offering a free Rumble video workout, as well as curated content, suggested workout looks and interviews with 1Rebel instructors.

Retail tie-ups with like-minded partners are becoming a key area of opportunity for boutique studios. Inspired by the retail success of boutique fitness operator SoulCycle – which saw retail account for 16 per cent of revenue in 2014 and is likely to have increased this since – operators like 1Rebel and Frame are working to beef up their own offerings.

For gym operators, the symbiotic partnerships also help boost secondary spend. Details: http://lei.sr?a=K5G8Y_H



1Rebel master trainer Mila Lazar



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Technology news

Ex-Twitter CEO reveals plans for fitness platform



Dick Costolo led Twitter for five years

Former Twitter CEO Dick Costolo has announced that he is working on a new fitness software platform which will seek to integrate existing apps and workouts with a strong "community aspect".

Costolo, who was CEO of the technology giant from 2010 to 2015, announced in a recent tweet that he is working with Fitify chief executive Bryan Oki on "a software platform that re-imagines the path to personal fitness".

The post said: "This platform will go beyond measurement to motivate and drive improvement and make the road to personal transformation fun and social. For wellness professionals, from fitness coaches to physical therapists and nutritionists and more, our platform will be the easiest and most flexible way to extend expertise and guidance."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=D8T8G_H

Fitness will 'dominate' wearables



Interpretation of wearable data is a big opportunity for the health club industry

Fitness tracking devices are expected to remain the dominant force in the wearable tech market over the next three years, according to new research, although smartwatches are anticipated to gradually increase their market share.

A new report from technology analyst Juniper Research titled *Future Health & Fitness Wearables: Business Models, Forecasts & Vendor Share 2016-2020* observed that lines between traditional fitness tracker bands and other wearables are beginning to blur, with fitness wearables offering a range of call-handling and notification functions that can also be found in smartwatches. The report adds that the existence of app-enabled fitness trackers, such as the Samsung

Gear Fit and Microsoft Band, lessens the distinction even further.

The wearable tech market has boomed in recent years and shows no signs of abating, with devices like the Apple Watch pushing wearables firmly into the mainstream. Currently worth around US\$5.1bn (£4.5bn £3.2bn), the market is expected to triple in value over the next decade.

Juniper analysts noted that fitness devices remain the most popular wearables, as they are both cheaper and have a more obvious use than current smartwatches. However, they said this would change by 2019, when fitness wearables are expected to be used by around 110m people worldwide, while smartwatches will have more than 130m users.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=j2H2k_H

Use iPhones to get kids active

Devices such as iPhones and tablets should be harnessed to create active lifestyles for children, rather than obstruct them, according to ukactive executive director Steven Ward.

Responding to recent British Heart Foundation National Centre (BHFNC) findings that 91 per cent of all 2-4 year olds are not hitting recommended exercise levels, Ward noted that tablets and smartphones have become the modern day dummy – a means for parents to pacify their children.

He said modern lifestyles mean that today's children are exposed to environments not always helpful for creating active habits, so creative solutions must be sought to encourage healthy lifestyles.

"The UK is in the grip of an inactivity crisis stretching from cradle to grave. From the

earliest age, it's essential that children are given the best chance to set positive habits for life," said Ward. "We need to find a way to use technology to create active lifestyles rather than remove them altogether."

His comments came after BHFNC research shed light on the extent of inactivity among British infants. The findings showed only nine per cent of 2-4 year olds are meeting the three hours of activity a day recommended by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO).

"That not even 10 per cent are meeting the CMO guidelines shows the message isn't getting through and something radical must be done," added Ward, whose organisation's recent *Generation Inactive* warned youth inactivity is a 'ticking time-bomb' for the NHS.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y5V7p_H



Ward has called for creative solutions

Supplier news

Private equity firm Ardian acquires Gantner



Gantner MD Elmar Hartmann

Fitness technology giant Gantner has been acquired by the private equity backer behind high street food chain EAT.

Investment company Ardian has agreed a management buyout of Gantner from former owner Idetec Group AG for an undisclosed amount. As part of the transaction, which remains subject to regulatory approval, the existing Gantner management team will invest in the company to ensure continuity.

Gantner is a major supplier of contactless wristbands, access control, payment and staff time recording solutions to the fitness industry, working with chains such as Virgin Active, Fitness First, Fresh Fitness and MacFit. The company recorded 2015 full-year sales of €36m (\$US40m, £28m) – an increase of around 20 per cent on the previous year. Details: http://lei.sr?a=H7x5X_H

Technogym edges towards IPO



Nerio Alessandri founded Technogym in his garage in Cesena, Italy, in 1983

Italian wellness giant Technogym is pushing forward with plans for a partial IPO in Italy, having filed preliminary papers with the country's stock market regulators.

The company announced yesterday that it is moving ahead with a proposed stock market listing – first mooted in May 2015 – to facilitate an investment exit for private equity fund Arle Capital Partners.

Technogym founder Nerio Alessandri – together with his brother Pierluigi – owns 60 per cent of the business, while Arle holds a 40 per cent stake. The company said the “foreseen exit” of Arle could lead to this 40 per cent stake being listed on the Italian stock market, should the company receive approval.

Alessandri has built the company from its inception in a garage in Cesena, Italy, into

one of the most recognised wellness brands in the world. The firm has supplied fitness equipment for every Olympic Games since Sydney 2000 and has also landed the exclusive contract for this year's Rio 2016 Olympics.

Technogym reported solid earnings growth for 2015, with turnover of €512m, (US\$562m, £405m) representing a 10 per cent increase on the previous year. The company also reported encouraging progress across international markets, with exports now representing 93 per cent of overall turnover.

In the past year, the company has also continued to develop an ecosystem according to the “internet of things” logic – this includes mobile apps to access user training programmes outside-the-gym.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=57o6D_H

Life owner snaps up Cybex

Brunswick Corporation has announced that it has acquired fitness supplier Cybex International for US\$195m (£179m, £138m), with Cybex set to join its Life Fitness Division portfolio of brands.

The deal, which is subject to a working capital adjustment, sees the full line of Cybex cardiovascular and strength products join the Life Fitness stable. Brunswick president and chief operating officer Mark Schwabero said that the acquisition would strengthen its stable of brands serving the commercial fitness market, enabling economies of scale, stronger presence in fast-growing segments and an increased reach across international markets.

“The Life Fitness – Cybex combination enables us to approach the market with a

broader and deeper product portfolio, and improve our ability to address the faster growing segments of the fitness market,” commented Schwabero.

“With the addition of Cybex’s manufacturing footprint, we can meet current and future demand and achieve manufacturing cost reduction objectives more effectively and efficiently. This combination provides cost synergies and scale as well as manufacturing and engineering capabilities to further improve our competitiveness and leadership position within the fitness industry.”

Schwabero added that the acquisition is consistent with Brunswick’s plan to double revenue of its Life Fitness Division by 2020. Details: http://lei.sr?a=T3f7y_H



Brunswick president Mark Schwabero

People news

Steve Barton named MD of Technogym UK



Barton joined Technogym in 2003

Technogym UK has announced that Steve Barton has been promoted to the role of managing director.

Having previously been UK sales director, Barton makes the step up to replace former managing director Andrea Bianchi, who is leaving the business.

Barton boasts more than 20 years of fitness industry experience and has been a long-serving member of the Technogym UK team, having joined in 2003 as national field sales manager.

"Having worked at Technogym for over 10 years I'm really proud to be offered this opportunity to significantly grow Technogym UK and promote our brand and philosophy," said Barton.

"2015 was a successful year for us, and I'm really looking forward to further building on this success in 2016."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p7d9Y>

Alan Ellis launches new firm



Alan Ellis spent over a decade in senior roles with Matrix, Cybex and SportsArt

Alan Ellis has left his role as strategic account manager at Matrix Fitness UK to launch a new consultancy: Thirty Six.

The sales professional, who has spent more than 10 years in the health and fitness industry, said Thirty Six will help clients achieve commercial goals and grow business through its broad network of specialists. These cover sales, marketing, branding, business development and consultancy, procurement and tendering, supply chain and logistics.

"We've created Thirty Six to offer something genuinely new to the industry. In the years I've spent working in commercial fitness, I've encountered many organisations that face continued challenges around commercialising their offering, increasing revenue streams, ensuring best value across

all their purchases and maximising the use of their facilities," commented Ellis.

"The solutions that are required are often multi-faceted and so our skills and experience in supporting a wide range of complex business projects is where we believe Thirty Six will provide a unique solution to the fitness and wellbeing industry."

Thirty Six has recently been awarded a management consultancy contract with fitness equipment supplier Servicesport – which works with suppliers such as Life Fitness and Matrix, as well as servicing contracts for the likes of Nuffield Health and the Ministry of Defence. The deal sees Thirty Six deliver an overview of the company's current strategy and activation of a number of projects.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=hgk4U_H

Pulse appoints Dean Hogan

Dean Hogan has been named national contracts manager for Pulse and will drive the leisure solutions provider's growing presence in the football operations market.

Hogan has more than 30 years' experience in the leisure sector and has held roles including national operations manager at Sports Direct Fitness and operations manager for Power League. Hogan was also previously the national contract manager for JJB Sports, where he was responsible for managing the company's Soccer Domes as well as its 71 Fitness Clubs.

"I'm delighted to have joined Pulse as National Contracts Manager," said Hogan.

"Pulse has a fantastic reputation, with over 35 years of expertise behind them and I'm looking forward to helping take the

organisation into a new phase, operating more facilities across the UK."

The appointment comes after Pulse was recently awarded a contract to operate three new soccer hubs on behalf of The Football Association, the Sheffield Football Trust and Sheffield City Council.

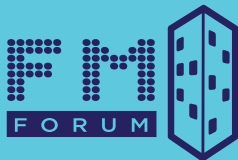
The sites have been selected as part of a new grassroots football pilot scheme known as 'the Parklife Project'. The Parklife Project is a new scheme from the FA aimed to get more people involved in the football at a grassroots level underpinned by high quality financially sustainable facilities. If the Parklife pilot scheme is successful, the FA will attempt to establish similar operations in 30 of England's largest cities.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Q7q9y_H



Hogan has over 30 years' experience

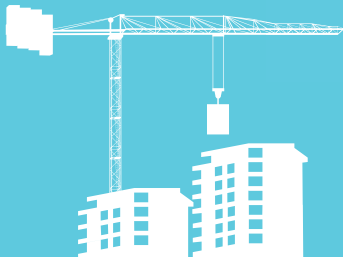
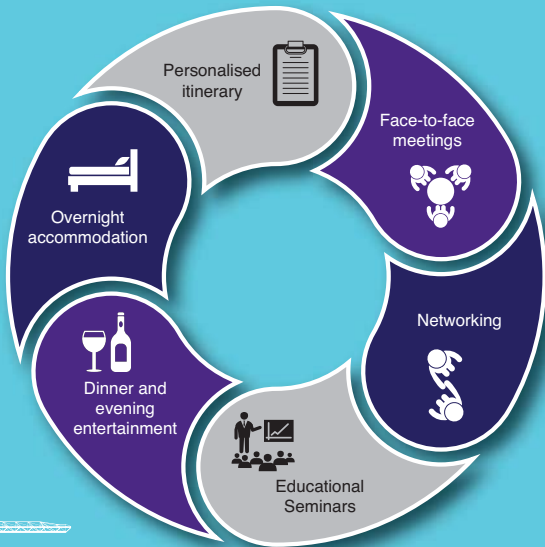
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EVENTS CALENDAR

MARCH

18–20 | The 2016 International Fitness Showcase Winter Gardens, Blackpool, UK

The ultimate fitness experience for fitness instructors and enthusiasts, offering three days of dance, aerobics, step, combat, mind-body, lectures and workshops.
www.chrysalispromotions.com

21–24 | IHRSa 2016 Orlando, Florida, US

The 35th Annual International Convention & Trade Show will offer a mix of seminars, keynote meetings and educational sessions together with a trade show.
www.ihrs.org/convention

22–23 | BASES Student Conference Bangor University, Bangor, UK

This conference will celebrate how research in sport and exercise sciences has really evolved and excelled since the London 2012 Games.
www.bases.org.uk/student-conference

29 March–1 April | ACSM 20th Health & Fitness Summit & Expo The Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista, Orlando, Florida, US

The annual summit and expo gives students, fitness enthusiasts, personal trainers, certified professionals and others the full spectrum of programming, from science to practical application.
www.acsmsummit.org

CHARITY EVENT

APRIL–SEPTEMBER The Gauntlet Games

The Gauntlet Games is staging five gladiator-themed events across the UK this summer to raise funds for Cancer Research. Complete a 5k or 10k route facing up to 15 obstacles including inflatables, a giant slide, foam and gladiators armed with giant pugil sticks and water guns. The series started just last year with the intention of getting more people (particularly women) fit. Teams are welcome to enter.

Details: www.thegauntletgames.co.uk



APRIL

2–3 | The OM Yoga Show SECC, Glasgow, UK

The total yoga experience under one roof, including free yoga and pilates classes, special workshops, yoga for children, as well as an exhibition. The London event takes place in October.
www.omyogashow.co.uk

6 | European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) Cologne, Germany

Following the success of last year's sell-out event, EuropeActive and FIBO invite visitors to join them in Cologne for the 3rd EHFF – the opening event of FIBO 2016.
www.europeactive.eu

7–10 | FIBO 2016 Cologne, Germany

The world's leading trade show for health, fitness and wellness, offering a platform for managers, distributors, suppliers and investors. This year's show will see brand new halls added, for a hands-on exploration of the future of the sector.
www.fibo.de

8–9 | FitPro LIVE 2016 Novotel London West, London, UK

FitPro LIVE's new format will encompass the FitPro LIVE Workshop Series – a series of interactive single-theme workshops – and FitPro LIVE 2016, two two-day multi-theme events.
www.fitpro.com/live16

13–14 | Millennial 20/20 Victoria House, Bloomsbury, London, UK

Millennial 20/20 will gather more than 2,000 brands, companies, founders and start-ups to examine and understand the Millennial consumer and marketplace.
www.millennial20-20.com

15–18 | ECA World Fitness Conference / OBOW Show New York City, US

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2016, ECA World Fitness' annual shows in New York and Florida highlight new products, ideas and concepts.
www.ecaworldfitness.com

CHARITY EVENT

15–22 OCTOBER Grand Canyon to Las Vegas Cycle

Just shy of 300 miles, this open-charity cycle challenge takes in the iconic Route 66 and West Rim Road. Riders will enjoy spectacular views of the Grand Canyon before celebrating in Las Vegas. Entry costs £499 and the fundraising target is £4,150.
www.discoveradventure.com



Jennie Price

The CEO of Sport England speaks to **Matthew Campelli** about the UK government's new sporting strategy, and the opportunities this presents all providers of physical activity

When Tracey Crouch delivered the government's sport and physical activity blueprint in December, the general response from the sector was one of genuine optimism.

A wide-ranging 10-year plan which makes little distinction between sport and physical activity; which joins the dots between sport, health and education; and which appears to take seriously a far broader agenda including mental health and social responsibility – all of this presents the industry with a comprehensive, if challenging, plan for altering the attitudes and habits of those apparently lost in an inactive abyss.

Few will feel that challenge keener than Sport England, which will take on a significantly broader remit. The quango was handed the responsibility for out-of-school participation for the over-fives (compared to its previous remit of over-14s), while the increasingly blurred line between sport and physical activity means the number of potential organisations that can receive government money, distributed by Sport England, has multiplied.

However, chief executive Jennie Price is bullish about the government's "first thinking from scratch piece for a long time" and the opportunities it presents her organisation and the wider industry.

BLURRING OF BOUNDARIES

Talking to *Health Club Management* in her bright London office shortly after the publication of the document – entitled *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* – it's clear Price is thinking about little else, and she has gyms and health club operators in her sights.

"I think the new strategy will create a climate where divisions are softer," says Price warmly. "There's something



Where funding is concerned, it's not going to be about the type of organisation you are or the type of activity you represent – it's all about delivery

Jennie Price



Sport England is launching 'a raft of swimming pilots' targeted specifically at women, to drive participation

for everyone in this new strategy, and hopefully there won't be anyone feeling too defensive. Inevitably, where funding is concerned, there will be some winners and some losers, but that's not going to be determined by the type of organisation you are or the type of activity you represent – it's all about delivery."

Health clubs and fitness operators have an "enormous role to play", says Price, because the "sheer number of people" that use them means they reach a greater proportion of the population than anyone else. "They have a non-gender specific offer, and increasingly also an offer that's open to lots of different demographic groups," she adds. "All of that is really important."

Traditionally the funder of national governing bodies of sport, Sport England will likely widen its pool of partners to chime with the government's ambition of providing grants to any projects that have a "meaningful and measurable impact" on people's lives – projects that could just as easily come from the fitness sector as from sport.

Neither will finance just be about funding from Sport England, as Price explains: "Private sector, health, education – there are lots of people and organisations who have a vested interest in the delivery of the sports strategy. It's not just a matter of thinking about our money – it's whose money we can co-invest with in such a way that the interests genuinely come together."

The number of potential stakeholders will become apparent this month, as Sport England rounds off its industry-wide consultation on how best to deliver on its responsibilities as set out in the new strategy.

FUNDING STREAMS

Price certainly expects to talk to a growing number of gym operators – both local authority operated and

privately owned – as Sport England pieces together its own strategy, which is due to be published next month.

She reveals that, while conversations with for-profit organisations cannot revolve around government funding for the time being, a passage buried in the sports strategy suggests this could be "relaxed" if the initiative were right.

"There are no problems in working with for-profit companies, but there are some technical issues about giving them money," explains Price. "We can't grant fund them with our National Lottery money at the moment, but that requirement might be relaxed at some point in the future. We've already prompted an investigation into whether there are any regulatory problems."

"So I'd like gyms to come and talk to us. We'd like to share some of the insight our research has unveiled around physical activity participation. I don't think they need to have a generic response to a particular brief – it would just be good to have some structured conversations with the major chains. We've had a number of conversations, but nothing concentrated that's then led to significant change – yet."

Insight, adds Price, will be Sport England's currency when making investment decisions going forward. If organisations want to get a piece of the action, their chances will not be harmed by taking on board suggestions that are provided by Sport England's extensive insight team, which is headed up by Lisa O'Keefe.

Price highlights the £28m Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub in Warrington, which Sport England part-funded, as an example of a project that received funding after taking the organisation's "customer-focused" advice into account (see also p64).

"The team at Orford recognised that, to make their economic proposition better, they needed to be seen

► as a deliverer of local authority services more generally,” explains Price. The centre has therefore incorporated a doctor’s surgery and a library as well as a leisure centre, which not only encourages cross-referral between facilities but also encourages visitors to take a look at the leisure facilities while they’re there – there are no physical barriers preventing people from walking in to see what’s on offer.

She continues: “We’ve really changed the way we approach our facilities investments. For any major strategic investments, we need an evidence base: evidence of what’s needed, what’s provided, and how it’s going to respond to customer demand. That’s the entry point now for any significant grant funding.”

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

While Price acknowledges that gyms and health clubs are often the most convenient places for people to take part in regular physical activity, she concedes that sometimes gyms’ “business imperatives” can get in the way of engaging with people who either don’t participate or who seldom take part in physical activity.

“If I go to a gym to do a bit of mystery shopping and say ‘I’d like to see the pool’, chances are that, by the time I’m 10 minutes in to the tour, the person showing me round has already tried to sell me a monthly membership,” she says. “But if you’re doing it for the first time and are a bit nervous, what’s actually going through your mind is: ‘What’s the changing room like – is it clean?’ You’re not in the mindset to negotiate a contract at all.”

Although Price accepts that gyms incentivise their salespeople, she therefore suggests a longer-term approach to target-setting might be in order, with staff rewarded for offering pleasant encounters that lead to people coming back a second time.

Indeed, a workforce strategy makes up a significant chunk of *Sporting Future*. Sport England has partnered with the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to develop a “single, clear and rigorous set of standards for all sport and exercise professionals”, driving towards what the DCMS calls a “greater professionalisation of the sport sector with a clear skills framework”.

Sport England’s research indicates that 2.8 million women increased their physical activity after *This Girl Can* launched in January 2015



‘This Girl Can’ had a strong sense of female empowerment through being physically active



Activity providers need to learn to take women's concerns into account

Price claims that having a whole workforce strategy is "extremely important", although the details of how all this might fit together are yet to be set in stone. "What I can say today is I know we need to be involved and I think we have something to offer in terms of the thinking and aggregation of research," she says.

THIS GIRL CAN

But can Sport England's behavioural knowledge and insight help make the gym a more comfortable place for novices overall? Price thinks so, and highlights the impact of Sport England's 2015 *This Girl Can* campaign – something she refers to as one of Sport England's "brands" – which aimed to boost female participation in physical activity.

The starting point of the campaign was, says Price, the fear of judgement which leads so many women to shy away from physical activity: "Am I fat? Do I look ridiculous in these clothes?" The resulting ads, with their strong sense of empowerment through being active – and to hell with being a bit sweaty in the process – were designed to make women across the country feel they too could have a go.

So did it work? According to last year's *Active People Survey*, the number of women getting active once a week

or more surged by 148,700 in the six months between April and October 2015, while Sport England's own research indicates that 2.8 million women were directly influenced to increase their physical activity after the campaign launched in January 2015.

The major increase in participation came from more women using the gym and running, says Price, adding that dance-related exercise is also becoming "increasingly popular" (see *HCM* Feb 16, p62).

Swimming is highlighted as another area of physical activity that women are heavily involved in, and the Sport England chief talks about a "raft of swimming pilots" being launched, specifically with operators of public sector facilities, where Sport England is funding specially designed sessions with female coaches, no loud music and extra cleaning in the changing rooms.

This Girl Can has also stimulated "a lot of very positive conversations" with gyms, which "recognise the power of the marketing and the brand", adds Price. A number have used *This Girl Can* marketing or adapted their own communications "using some of its principles".

Not only that, but the campaign led to a partnership with Marks & Spencer, in which the retailer developed its

This Girl Can has stimulated a lot of very positive conversations with gyms which recognise the power of the marketing and the brand

► own range of women's sportswear based on the insight at the heart of the *This Girl Can* campaign.

"I think we probably need to do more to increase engagement across the board, though, because people have tended to take the campaign as it's been presented rather than looking at the insight behind it," Price says. "It's actually the insight that's the most powerful thing. What do women feel they're being judged on, and what's going to make them feel more comfortable? How can physical activity providers adjust what they're doing to take women's feelings and concerns into account?"

Price reveals that Sport England is currently talking to the government about continuing this national campaign, while *This Girl Can* will also keep up the momentum via its popular online community.

A BROADER HORIZON

More work with non-sporting bodies is also on Price's list of priorities as the sports strategy unfolds.

"A good example is the work we've been doing with Macmillan," she says. "Doctors often tell cancer patients to rest, but there's evidence that your ability to deal with the impact of the disease is much greater – and your risk of recurrence lower – if you're active (see also p14).

"Macmillan has a really refined understanding of the challenges faced by people in the system, so they provide the knowledge and we provide the sport and exercise element. We've had some really positive trials – both in active treatment and post-treatment support – which Macmillan is now significantly expanding with its own money, because they've been so successful.

"I also see us working with other charities, youth groups, Scouts and Guides. We've already done



Sport England has already done some work with the Forestry Commission around outdoor activities

some work with the National Trust and the Forestry Commission around outdoor activities too – around making better use of their space.

"So I'm really enthusiastic about *Sporting Future*. I think there are lots of opportunities for us. My heart is really in this, which hopefully you can hear in my voice." ●

A shift in focus

Sport England's *Active People Survey* – which every year offers an overview of participation rates across a range of sporting activities – is soon to be replaced by a new *Active Lives Survey*, which will embrace a far broader range of activities including dance, walking and cycling.

Active Lives, says Price, will produce a "much more rounded picture" of the state of play of physical activity in the country.

The research will now ask people to submit data on what they've done in terms of sport and physical activity in both the last 12 months and the last 28 days – this compared to the *Active People Survey*, which asks people only what sporting activities they're currently doing.

"If your pitch was waterlogged, if you had a bad day, if you went Christmas shopping or if you felt sick, your participation as measured by *Active People* can suddenly go



Price says the new survey will present a more rounded picture

from four to three times a month, even if four times a month is your normal pattern," she says, by way of an explanation for the longer timescale. Data for *Active Lives* is already being collected, and the new survey will run concurrently with the last ever *Active People Survey* in 2016 before going it alone next year.

"The 12-month reference period allows us to paint a much more nuanced picture of what people do across a timescale," Price continues. "People's mix of activities changes all the time. They might want to do something competitive for three months, then go and do yoga for six months and then run a marathon.

"Sports such as cricket also enable people to be active in other ways – running and going to the gym, for example – to keep fit during the large proportion of the year when conditions aren't right to play the sport."

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Attracting Investment

From IPOs to seed-funding, private equity to crowdfunding, investor interest in the fitness sector is booming. **Jak Phillips** reports



hisper it quietly, but fitness is fast becoming the hottest ticket in town for many investors.

From a glut of seed-funding for imaginative start-ups, to venture capital funding for mid-sized businesses breaking out, to high-profile IPOs for some of the sector's biggest hitters, investors of all types are turning their attention to the health and fitness industry.

As noted by Deloitte's Karsten Hollasch last year, one of the surest signs of an attractive investment climate is a surge in the level of merger and acquisition (M&A) activity. Presenting the *European Health & Fitness Market Report 2015* at FIBO, he noted that there were 19 M&A transactions alone in 2014, compared to an overall total of 24 in the three years previously. This trend is continuing to gather pace, with the forthcoming report – set to be released next month – expected to identify 22 such deals in 2015.

WHAT TYPE OF INVESTMENT?

M&A aside, we're seeing an explosion in investments of all types across the sector, and businesses must decide which investment strategy is right for them: seed funding, crowdfunding, venture capital, private equity, IPO? What sort of investor are they looking for? How much equity in their company are they actually willing to give up?



At the entry point to the market, innovative fitness tech start-ups such as dynamic pricing platform Dibs, social workout app Fitssi and management software provider Glofox have all attracted seed-funding in recent months to accelerate their growth into new markets. Meanwhile, new players such as 1Rebel have embraced the benefits of new investment avenues such as crowdfunding to raise eye-watering sums of money in double quick time.

From a private equity perspective, established chains such as Virgin Active and Barry's Bootcamp have sold significant chunks of their businesses to high-powered investment firms (Brait and North Castle Partners respectively) to turbocharge their growth ambitions.

But perhaps the strongest example of the fitness sector's growing appeal lies

in the number of IPOs the industry has witnessed over recent months.

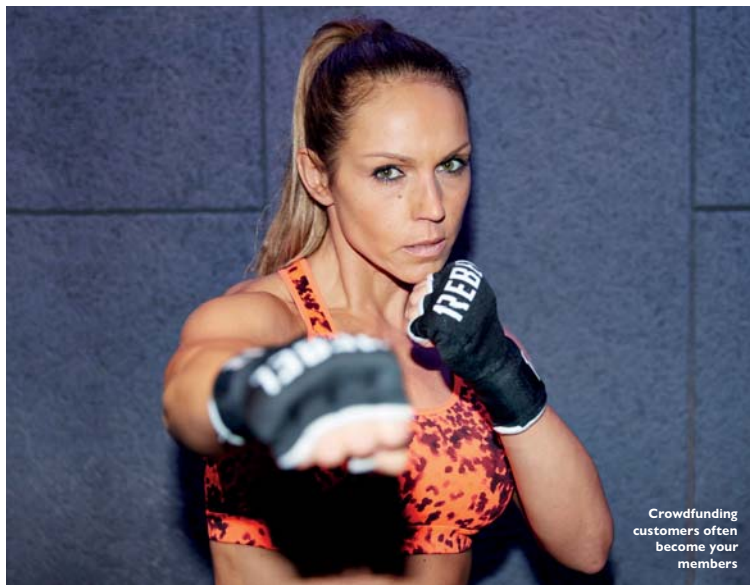
Following US flotations for Fitbit and Planet Fitness, The Gym Group became the first UK operator in 15 years to go public in November (see *HCM* Feb 16, p28) and has since seen its shares climb 20 per cent as investors have scrambled for a slice of the fitness pie. Not to be outdone, budget rival Pure Gym is now limbering up for a listing of its own, with early indications suggesting the chain could be valued at more than £500m.

"The flotation of The Gym Group has shown the appetite for investment into the physical activity sector," concluded Mazars' head of leisure Gareth Jones in a recent market analysis. "How the IPO assists with the expansion of The Gym Group from its current 66 sites will be keenly watched by competitors, and welcomed by those who see the huge potential of the low-cost model in driving the growth of the sector."

A GROWING APPETITE

Clearly there's appetite for investment in the fitness sector, and the valuable contacts and expertise that these investors bring with them can be a huge asset in scaling a business: whether you're a small start-up or a well-established firm looking to take operations to the next level, every company needs investment to make good on expansion plans.

We speak to some leading industry figures in fitness and investment to uncover their top tips for securing funding.



Crowdfunding customers often become your members

James Balfour
Co-founder,
1Rebel

We pursued crowdfunding as we see ourselves as a market disruptor and this seemed like the most on-brand option for raising capital. It allows your customers to be your investors and your investors to be your customers, and it obviously brings a marketing boost in terms of added publicity.

The downside, of course, is that if you fail it's a very public failure. But new market entrants seeking funding always risk private equity punishment on valuation and control of the business, whereas on crowdfunding you will get a more sympathetic valuation. This is because crowdfunding investors don't need to justify their job in making that call – they're investing in a story they want to be part of. And by raising capital through crowdfunding, you avoid anybody taking a board seat or a veto right.

The key thing to realise is that just

Communication is key to a successful relationship; an angry investor is usually an ill-informed investor

James Balfour

because you take the pitch online, you won't suddenly be flooded with investments. We had to do a serious amount of work to raise that money – I would say at least 50 per cent of the money raised came from us slogging it out, talking to people and presenting.

You also need a strong web presence. The first thing potential investors do these days is check out your Google reviews, your website, your Twitter account and your communication with your customers. They'll believe your marketing spiel only so far, then they'll dig around for themselves – and it's very easy to do that.

Once you have the investors on-board, communication is absolutely key to a successful relationship. We have a private Facebook group for our investors where we share all the latest 1Rebel news and updates from the press to keep them informed; an angry investor is usually an ill-informed investor.





Investors with specialised knowledge and contacts can be ambassadors for your brand

Phillip Roesch-Schlenderer

Phillip Roesch-Schlenderer
Founder and CEO,
eGym

When scaling a business quickly, first and foremost you need the right team. From day one, our recruiting strategy has been to look only for the best talent. This makes things a lot easier when you're talking to investors.

For me, it's always been very important to identify investors who are a perfect match for eGym. It's not just about the money you raise – it's also about other factors like the team, existing networks and market knowledge that really make the difference. Given our goal for eGym to be a true global player in the fitness industry, our investors have to share this goal. Luckily

there has been a strong interest in our business from the very beginning, so we've always had a choice of potential investors.

It's also very important to bring in investors with specialised knowledge and contacts – people who can be your brand ambassadors. Our investors include the likes of Jürgen Gallmann, who – having held top management positions at both IBM and Microsoft Germany – has a lot of credibility when he addresses an audience about the benefits of digitisation for our industry. Another example is Mario Görlich, an industry veteran with unmatched knowledge of gym organisation and holistic training concepts. Gallmann and Görlich, in addition to being investors in eGym, are regular speakers at many of our events.

Jim Graham
COO,
The Gym Group
& Former operating partner,
Phoenix Equity Partners

Private equity firms tend to look for really good management teams with a simple business model that's well executed. You also need a slick elevator pitch: nobody will invest if you can't explain to them in a few sentences what your company does, how it makes money and why that's defensible.

Management teams should look for backers who bring more to the party than just their capital. That added value could be in the shape of strategic insight,

operational expertise or the ability to find and execute bolt-on acquisitions.

Successful PE investments depend on frank agreement on the few major priorities needed to deliver the business plan. Over a three- to five-year investment, don't try to do 10 things or you'll do them all badly. Stick to two or three and have an unwavering focus on delivering them really well.

Private equity firms need to get a return on their investors' money, so if they start talking about how to exit the investment soon after they've entered, get over it!

Last piece of advice? Find people you like and respect. Chances are, if they also like and respect you, it'll be easier to deal with the inevitable bumps along the way.

Nobody will invest if you can't explain in a few sentences what your company does, how it makes money and why that's defensible

Jim Graham



**The Gym Group:
'Look for investors who bring more than just capital'**

BORN DIGITAL



eGym was founded in 2010. Unencumbered by the past we've always had a digital mind-set. And the result is, as you would expect.



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FIBO 2016
hall 7/c30

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Brian Schuring

Founding partner,
Rubicon Ventures
& Co-founder,
Heartcore

We're a little unique in the venture space because of our operating background, so if we don't feel our experience adds value or don't feel we have a unique view on a situation, we'll politely pass.

Once we cross that hurdle, we ask two really important questions: firstly, does this format actually get clients better results over a long-term horizon than other platforms; and secondly, is there proof – in length of engagement or weekly returns data – that the format is sticky enough to see any given client coming back for 12+ months?

After we're comfortable with that, we start with a fairly standard checklist of questions. Is the format floorplan-efficient without being a commodity? What does the competitive environment in the format look like today – and what do we think will it look like in five years' time? Are there barriers to entry that should protect pricing as more capacity comes to market? Is the company/instructor the best in the market at what they do, and can that skill be taught in a way that allows the business to scale beyond just a couple of studios?

Once that's covered off, we spend time getting to know the business owners better and, if we feel there's a great fit between what they're looking to do and what we can help with, we'll look to get involved.



I don't always make decisions based on the bottom line, but on the culture. Our investors understand that

Joey Gonzales

Joey Gonzales

CEO,
Barry's Bootcamp

Finding a partner who shares both your vision and values is the most important thing. Our collaboration with North Castle Partners was a natural fit, not only due to its extensive experience with fitness operators, but also because it possesses a deep understanding and appreciation of the Barry's Bootcamp DNA.

For me as CEO, a big part of my role is acting as a cultural compass, making sure my employees and customers feel that, as Barry's Bootcamp is scaling up, it retains the

sense of close-knit community that we've worked so hard to build and preserve.

It's vital to remember that the fitness industry is a people-driven industry, and there have been moments where I've said: "I don't always make decisions based on the bottom line – I make decisions based on the culture, how it's going to affect my employees and my consumers." North Castle Partners understand that.

You want to find an investor who can provide you with the tools to make data-driven decisions, lend expertise on markets, and help you to successfully scale your business while still maintaining the integrity of your brand. ●

**Thirst for investment**

Speaking at last year's Flame Conference, ukactive chair Tanni Grey-Thompson noted that the 'ears of investors have pricked up'. To deepen this investor interest, ukactive is now working on a true valuation of the sector in terms of its wider economic impact, which Grey-Thompson believes will make it significantly easier for fitness businesses to attract investment.

So why are investors so eager to fund fitness firms? A combination of historically low interest rates and ongoing market uncertainty mean growth sectors are currently at a premium – and fitness ticks this box, bolstered by the leading role it stands to play in tackling the looming health crisis.

Fitness has also become an attractive investment proposition due to its growing presence in mainstream culture. Thanks in part to celebrity personalities such as The Body Coach – whose latest book is the UK's biggest seller so far this year – and the prominence of fitness across social media due to the advocacy of young exponents, fitness has developed that intangible yet invaluable veneer of cool.

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Pumped UP

Philippe Starck's first company was set up to create inflatable objects in the 1960s. Almost 50 years later and his designs have become increasingly ambitious. We take a look around his 'inflatable' health club in Montpellier, France



Le Nuage is a factory
of energy for everyone
and for the town
of Montpellier

Philippe Starck



PHOTO: JAMES BORT

French designer Philippe Starck has created an 'inflatable' health club in Montpellier, France, by cladding the building with fluorine-based ETFE to create a bubble-like façade housing fitness facilities over five floors.

Opened in October 2014, Le Nuage club ('nuage' means 'cloud' in French) includes a fitness studio and gym, swimming pool, café, children's area, hairdressers and beauty salon. The striking interior features a range of Starck-designed furniture; the exterior can change colour with the use of special lighting.

Roxim, the developer, says the building was inspired by the gymnasiums developed into baths during the Greek and Roman times, which were designed to be places for both training and relaxation.

"The beauty and richness of life arises from diversity, translucency and projections," said Starck.

He continues: "This building is the opposite of an architectural gesture. It is a 'nearly nothing'; an urban space, a chaotic and free town, a magic bubble – virtually indestructible, even though it only has the thickness of a few tenths of a millimetre. Le Nuage is a factory of energy for everyone and for the town of Montpellier."



The health club was designed with a series of air-filled 'pillows' on the façade to give an impression of lightness



The minimalist, industrial-style gym features equipment from Technogym



Philippe Starck furniture has been used throughout the facility, which is spread over five floors





The building is clad with fluorine-based ETFE, which can change colour with altered lighting



The design features industrial-looking surfaces and exposed pipework, mixed with flashes of colour

Levison Wood

He recently walked the length of the Himalayas for a TV series, and he's now working with Virgin Active to add a sense of adventure to the gym. **Kate Cracknell** finds out why

Your background is as a journalist. How has that morphed into becoming an explorer?

Actually I don't think anything has fundamentally changed. I'm still doing the same thing I was when I was in the army and indeed after I left: undertaking expeditions in remote places as an expedition leader, guide or photographer. The only real difference is that now I'm writing about it and it's documented on TV – first with my *Walking the Nile* series, and most recently with *Walking the Himalayas*.

I'm still not entirely comfortable with the term 'explorer' if I'm honest. I generally call myself a writer or a photographer over and above anything else.

What led you into this career path?

As much as anything, I think my motivation was an anti-motivation: I really wanted to avoid having to sit in front of a computer at a desk all day long. In the process, I've found myself in the very privileged position of having a vocation that allows me to travel and see the world.

What were the highlights and low points of your latest adventure in the Himalayas?

The highlights included spending time with nomads in Afghanistan – that was really incredible. Meeting the Dalai Lama. Seeing the Tigers Nest Monastery in Bhutan and going to Everest Base Camp.

But there were some low points as well. For starters, I was involved in a major car crash. But it was also things like seeing Nepal in such a state of turmoil in the aftermath of the earthquake, with riots and border closures and fuel strikes and all the rest of it – seeing places in trouble. That casts a shadow.

You're now part of Virgin Active's Discovery Lab. Tell us about that.

The focus has been coming up with ideas to appeal to those who wouldn't ordinarily go to the gym for the sake of it. Exercise has to be about more than just going to the gym and doing weights: you need to be focused on a goal.

We've therefore been looking at how we can get people interested in taking up a new activity: they might



Wood wants to inspire others through his expeditions

want to do an ultra-marathon or a Tough Mudder, for instance. But if they look at that finishing line from the outset, it will seem too hard and they'll be put off.

My suggestions to Virgin Active have been the same principles I use when I plan and train for my expeditions: you have to break the task down into bite-sized chunks, with achievable goals along the way.



Exercise has to be about more than just going to the gym and doing weights: you need to be focused on a goal

Levison Wood





Don't be intimidated by the gym as a concept. Look at it simply as a vehicle to achieve whatever your personal goals are

Levison Wood



PHOTO: JAMES WILKES

- We're also taking those principles and looking at how we bring them to life in the clubs. For example, Virgin Active now offers Muddermaker classes to prepare people for a Tough Mudder. We'll be creating more courses and programming for people who want to train towards other events, and Virgin Active is also looking to develop altitude studios, which I'll work with them on.

This all sounds quite niche – suitable for already fit people?

Actually I think what I'm doing is quite accessible to most people. First and foremost, it's about encouraging them to try something new. I'm not going to try and drag anyone off the sofa, but if people have that internal motivation, if they're willing to get up and try something new... Those are the people I want to try and motivate.

After all, anyone can go for a walk. Even in my TV expeditions, I'm not doing anything that requires technical skills. Anyone who wants to be fit and healthy can aspire to do what I do. You just have to be willing to get started and to train until you reach a certain level.

And that's my ultimate aim: to inspire people through my expeditions to show that anyone, whoever they are, can train and prepare for even the highest goals. The hardest thing is getting to the starting point. You have to prepare and you have to work hard to get there, but it is achievable – and it's achievable for anyone.

Will you try anything new yourself this year?

Yes. Normally my fitness regime is pretty basic – jogging, circuits and the occasional swim. But I've never been a great swimmer and that's something I want to change, so I'll definitely be doing more swimming. Also, while I obviously



Muddermaker classes at Virgin Active prepare people for Tough Mudder

do a lot of walking, I don't stretch off as much as I should. I know I need to be more flexible, so I'm going to take up yoga. It's not something I'd ever considered, but I did it in the Himalayas and being in places like India and Nepal where people do yoga was fascinating.

So I'm going to try a few new things this year and see where that leads me. I'd encourage others to do the same.

How do you think gyms can broaden their appeal?

I think people who don't go to the gym are scared of the concept. They're overawed by the idea of walking into a big building full of machines they don't recognise and don't know how to use. People don't like to seem ignorant.

But when you go to a gym, nobody's actually looking at you or what you're doing – they're concentrating on their own regimes. So just go in there, ask questions if you need to, but don't be scared of doing what you need to do. If you're overweight, get on the machines and lose a few pounds. If you need to build muscle, pick up some weights and do just that. Don't be intimidated by the gym as a concept. Look at it simply as a vehicle to allow you to achieve whatever your personal goals are.

I think gyms also need to make themselves more welcoming and friendly – places people can go with friends, hang out afterwards, where there's a community atmosphere and loads of fun things going on.

What's next for you?

There are a few ideas up in the air, but nothing's fixed yet. I'll always want to travel and be in wild, remote places. I won't necessarily walk everywhere, but I don't think I'll ever stay still in one place and not travel. ●



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HEALTHY MIND HEALTHY BODY

Hectic lifestyles and stress-related illnesses are two factors leading people towards mindful exercise like yoga and pilates. **Kath Hudson** asks the experts what's next in the field of mind-body



At Heartcore studios, pilates attendance is up 25 per cent year-on-year



**BRIAN
SCHURING**
Co-founder
Heartcore, UK

At our studios, yoga attendance is up 30 per cent year-on-year and pilates is up 25 per cent. We're seeing particularly strong growth among males, many of whom historically trained by themselves or with a PT, but who have warmed to the idea of getting great guidance in a class-based environment.

We're also seeing strong growth from the 40-plus age range in lower-impact disciplines like barre, which grew by 300 per cent last year at Heartcore.

Meditation and mindfulness can play a huge role in improving wellbeing, and there's a real opportunity for health and fitness operators to help clients improve their physical health by supporting what we call 'fair weather in the mind' – not only within dedicated offerings and classes, but even more so when highlighted in other class formats.

Because of population density, it's hard to run profitable boutique studios outside

major metropolitan areas, but that doesn't mean there aren't people in other areas who would benefit from training in this way. Providing those people with access to classes and guidance digitally will be a big push over the next few years.

In fact, we're already seeing strong growth in the digital fitness arena and the rise of the digital fitness personalities, and streaming and app-based guidance will continue to grow. This technology gives people content that they might not otherwise be able to access, and also provides additional distribution for studios and individual fitness instructors.



Over-35s are looking for classes that help the mind as well as the body



**JOANNE
MATTHEWS**
Founder
Ten Pilates, UK

There are a few agendas colliding at the moment which are benefiting the mind-body sector. Our sedentary lifestyles, combined with being

constantly connected to technology and multi-tasking, means that people need help to switch off more than ever before. Mental health has never been such a hot topic: our core audience is people aged 35-plus, looking for a holistic approach and help to switch off.

As a result, meditation and mindfulness will become increasingly popular, not only in the wellness and fitness sectors but in the wider business community as well.

We've recently taken mindfulness classes into the City of London, which have been very well received.

The younger audience is more goal-orientated and drawn to events like Tough Mudder and cycling a leg of the Tour de France. To engage this market, studios need to offer a service that supports their goals. For example, we use Wattbikes to reveal imbalances that we can then correct through pilates classes.



**LINDSAY G
MERRITHEW**
President and CEO
Merrithew

Mind-body fitness and mindful movement are poised to go mainstream as the ways of approaching it proliferate and expand. There's a general cultural shift towards maintaining overall wellness: people are now considering how their daily habits affect their health, and also how state of health is connected with state of mind.

We're seeing growing interest in speciality training programmes, with more people becoming rehabilitative conditioning practitioners, sport-specific trainers, senior population specialists and so on. We're also seeing big opportunities internationally – for example China, Australia, France, Mexico and Spain.

The philosophy of the mind-body connection has existed in many different forms in different countries and cultures throughout history, which is one of the reasons why mindful movement is being so quickly understood and accepted worldwide.



The connection between mind and body is readily understood and accepted, says Merrithew

"WE'RE SEEING GROWING INTEREST IN SPECIALITY TRAINING PROGRAMMES – FOR SPORT-SPECIFIC TRAINERS, SENIOR POPULATION SPECIALISTS AND SO ON"



KEN ENELMAN
Founder and CEO
Balanced Body

Although it is in fact neither of these things, pilates is sometimes still seen as too exclusive and/or too female-orientated. Meanwhile, club managers tell us their members are looking for smarter ways to exercise – things they as a club can provide without too much financial outlay and also without taking up too much floor space.

As a result, we're trying to create programmes that incorporate new elements that are complementary to pilates, but which bring more of a cardio and strength training dimension to the class. Programmes like MOTR and Bodhi Suspension Training, for example, are allowing us to widen participation – appealing to more male members – while still providing people with an effective, focused, full-body workout.

Our goal is ultimately to get more people moving. We believe that, if we can get some people who might be intimidated by pilates to try, for example, MOTR – because it's unusual and fun – that acts as a great introduction to mindful movement, and this might encourage them to try a Reformer class in the future.



Including programmes like MOTR can help widen the appeal of pilates

"ALTHOUGH IT IS IN FACT NEITHER OF THESE THINGS, PILATES IS SOMETIMES STILL SEEN AS TOO EXCLUSIVE AND/OR TOO FEMALE-ORIENTATED"



CHRIS ONSLOW
MD
Mbodies

Pilates is increasingly experiencing falling participation among the younger age groups, and fitness pilates is a shrinking market. However, it's gaining share in the post-40 wellness market. As a result, instructors are having to enhance their initial training, which was never designed to cater for the grey market. For instructors who maintain training and focus on the wellness market, the opportunities are tremendous.

With research showing that people are choosing to take part in non-competitive, participatory recreation activities like yoga, swimming, walking and cycling – as opposed to traditional sports – there are exciting opportunities on the horizon.

Within the next decade, I believe there will be a political push to focus the education of health, fitness and wellness instructors towards the health of the nation, as opposed to the health of the individual. This could involve public health campaigns with population-specific exercise programming, targeting groups like cancer survivors, post-menopausal women and those with neurological conditions. ●

Pilates is rising in popularity in the post-40s wellness market



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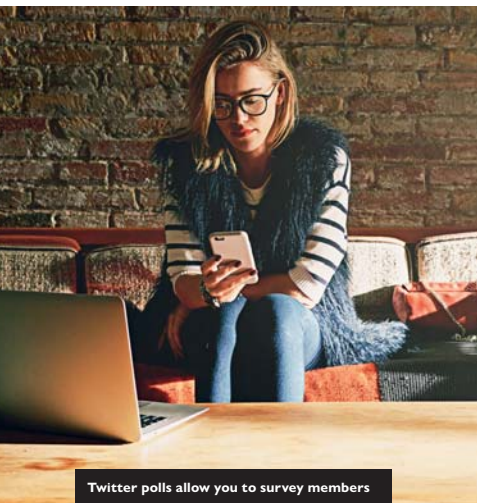
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Let's get social

Former *Apprentice* candidate **Katie Bulmer-Cooke** gives her tips on making social media work for you



Twitter polls allow you to survey members

Social media is the most powerful tool we have at our disposal when it comes to spreading our business's message and engaging with current and potential customers – and one of the best things about it is it's incredibly cost-effective. It's certainly had a dramatic impact on my fitness business, helping me take my operation from a local, Sunderland-based business to a company with customers in 12 countries around the world.

When used correctly, anything is possible and there really are no boundaries to the success and revenue it can generate. With that in mind, here are my top tips for making social media work for your business.

1

REAL-LIFE TESTIMONIALS

If you really want to engage the inactive and the overweight who are yet to step foot in your facility, stop using images of body beautiful women without a drop of sweat on their foreheads. Such photographs will not encourage Mrs Jones – with three kids and whose last workout is a very distant memory – to step foot in your health club. In fact, it will do the opposite.

Use images of real-life members who non-users can identify with. Better still, get some video interviews from your more down-to-earth members and share them on social media. In the video, ask what made them apprehensive about joining, what their barriers were, how they've been helped to overcome them and how they feel now. This is an extremely powerful tool in encouraging non-members to take that first step through the door.

2

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

Stop simply tweeting and posting Facebook statuses about your services and what's happening in your club, and instead interact with members and potential members and start to build a relationship. Make your social media feed something people follow to be both entertained and listened to – it's great for customer feedback and market research too. There are some great ways to do this:

■ Twitter chats

This involves publicising, on all of your platforms, that you will be hosting a Twitter chat on certain day at a certain time and on a certain topic – it could be nutrition, training, gym fears or anything that's relevant to your customer demographic. Then choose a hashtag – for example, I could use #AskKatie.

Then, at the given time on the given day, followers simply tweet their questions and include the predetermined hashtag. But whatever happens, don't forget the golden rule of Twitter chats: you must reply, and quickly, in order to create conversation and therefore build trust. After all, why would someone buy from you if they can't rely on you or trust you?

■ Twitter polls

This is a fairly new tool offered by Twitter and allows you to very simply ask the opinion of your followers, whereby you pose a question with several possible responses. I use this tool a lot to learn more about what my followers want from me – in terms of both content and products – as well as to gain an insight into other areas of their lifestyles.

■ Periscope

This is one of my favourites and was a big hit in 2015, but is still massively under-used by the fitness industry – mainly because people worry too much about being on video. We need to get over this inhibition, and fast, because this is a big opportunity.

Periscope offers live video streaming via Twitter and is a godsend for clubs that want to recruit new members. Put yourself in the shoes of the apprehensive, inactive Mrs Jones for a second. She wants to come to the gym but fears the unknown. She doesn't know what to expect – the layout, how the machines work or what goes on behind the dreaded studio door.

All of these aspects, and many more, are putting people like Mrs Jones off taking the giant step of just coming for a look around your facility.



Periscope lets you give live online tours of the gym

“PEOPLE WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT BEING ON VIDEO. WE NEED TO GET OVER THIS INHIBITION, AND FAST, BECAUSE THIS IS A BIG OPPORTUNITY”

INTRODUCING KATIE

Katie Bulmer-Cooke is a fitness entrepreneur who started setting up exercise classes in her home town of Sunderland at the age of 16. She now sells her fitness DVDs and online training programmes around the world, as well as advising fellow fitness professionals on growing their businesses, and developing new group fitness concepts for leisure trusts, councils and the private sector.

She was International Fitness Showcase (IFS) UK Personal Trainer of the Year 2012, FitPro's UK Fitness Professional of the Year 2013, and was a candidate on BBC1's *The Apprentice* in 2014.

In addition to consultancy and brand creation, she presents a health and fitness show (Total Tone Up) and a chat show (Chatty Lassies) on MADE TV, and writes for a number of consumer magazines.

www.katiebulmer.com



www.thefitmummymanual.com

Periscope can help you break down these barriers instantly, by taking the phone into the studio, interviewing members, doing machine demos and meeting the staff. It's quick, real and free!

While we're on the topic of interaction, it's very important that not only are we thinking about new content and methods of interaction, but also the words we use. We need to be choosing language that is non-intimidating if we want to engage the non-user. I can tell you for a fact that Mrs Jones isn't engaged with terminology such as 'smashing it', 'nailing it', 'killing that workout' and 'turning on beast mode', so let's stop using these cult-like phrases.

3

STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD

Social feeds move very quickly, so it's important to stand out from other accounts. Rather than checking what your competitors are doing and then taking inspiration from them, instead check them out then do the exact opposite.

As an example, last year, while everyone else was churning out Black Friday promotional offers and campaigns, we did Yellow Thursday. This allowed us to stand out in a sea of black infographics in the feed and also gave us the opportunity to get in there first. It had a significant impact on online sales – almost double that of the Black Friday promo from the previous year.

Social media has so much potential, all we have to do is grab the opportunity with both hands – and of course a smartphone! Here's to your social success, gaining new followers who become fans and then fanatical customers. ●



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Harry Kay – Property Director at Fitness First

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Any compulsory overtime now gets factored into holiday pay calculations

The holiday pay headache

The rules on how to calculate holiday pay are changing. **Jessica Higgins** offers her expert advice on how to resolve this potential headache

Many staff in health clubs work overtime. In addition, commission or bonuses often make up part of their pay.

It's therefore crucial that gyms are aware of recent legal decisions whereby compulsory overtime (where an employee is obliged to work overtime you offer) and the commission employees normally earn must now be included when calculating holiday pay.

In other words, when calculating holiday pay, a business has to factor in not just an employee's basic salary, but also the commission they would normally earn and any extra income they would expect to get – a bonus, for example, or from working compulsory overtime.

The position in respect of voluntary overtime is less clear, but current advice is that – if your staff regularly work such

overtime as part of their normal duties, as many in the industry do – it should be included as part of their holiday pay. Bonuses and other regular payments should also be included.

SICK LEAVE vs HOLIDAY

Also of note is that employees on sick leave continue to accrue holiday entitlement. Staff on long-term sick leave can choose to designate some of that sick leave as annual leave and be paid for it. Alternatively they can carry over any accrued but untaken leave into the next holiday year for up to 18 months. If their employment ends, they would be entitled to be paid for the accrued holiday even if they were off sick at the time.

Conversely, employees who book holiday and then get sick have a right to reclaim their holiday.

Of course, if there's no sick pay – which is the likely scenario in most cases – it would be rare an employee decided they'd rather not be paid, by designating the day as a sick day rather than paid holiday.

CHANGING HOURS

Finally, a common occurrence in the industry is staff changing their hours – for example, switching from full-time to part-time or vice versa. What happens to holiday pay in this scenario? Thankfully any leave already accrued does not need to be recalculated retrospectively to reflect the increase/decrease in hours. You just calculate leave from the point of the change in hours.

BE WARNED...

If you fail to pay correct holiday pay, your staff will be able to bring a claim in the Tribunal for an unlawful deduction of wages. This must be done within three months of the date of the failure to make payment. Claims are limited to a two-year period over which the deductions were regularly made, meaning there must have been no more than a three-month gap between the deductions. ●

Doing the calculations

The amount of holiday pay should be calculated by using a 12-week reference period preceding the holiday taken.

This only applies to four weeks of annual leave (derived from European Law) and not the full 5.6 weeks minimum that employees are entitled to under UK Law. In practice, however, it may be sensible to do the calculations for the full 5.6-week holiday period – otherwise employers will have to do one calculation for four weeks to include commission and so on, and then another for the 1.6 weeks' additional leave. Self-employed staff such as personal trainers are unlikely to qualify as 'workers', so will not be entitled to paid leave.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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CHANGING TIMES

Craftsman Lockers' highly collaborative approach and bespoke designs are leading the way

Today's scale and diversity of changing room provision demand a level of experience, sensitivity and innovation consistent with the need to meet the ever-rising expectations of club members and visitors aged 18 to 80 plus. Whether it is the vibrantly expansive facilities of Sweat Union gym in Walsall, the pared-back industrial chic of 1Rebel, or the historic interiors of golf venues such as Wentworth, Sunningdale and Coombe Hill, the Craftsman team is 100 per cent committed to delivering excellence.

Craftsman Lockers has 25 years' experience of creating changing provision that services large and diverse memberships and visitor profiles, whose expectations continue to rise steeply as the industry evolves.

Having partnered with many health club operators over that time, Craftsman is extremely well versed in tailoring changing room solutions to the specific needs of individual

clubs and their demographic. 1Rebel is not alone in stating of the company's installations: "We wanted changing facilities that truly reflect our brand and values. Craftsman's solution serves our needs and that of our members perfectly."

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

In golf, Craftsman partners private and proprietary clubs to place them on an inspirational platform for the 21st century, fashioning purpose-designed and installed changing areas that often exceed expectations. At heritage clubs such as Highgate, with a largely high net worth member profile, seamless project management was crucial in ensuring minimal disruption to daily functioning during a process of future-proofing for members as it strives to attract younger members. The company's deep knowledge of how to reconfigure changing space proved a key feature of the work.

Craftsman offers 25 years' experience of creating changing provision that services often large and diverse memberships and visitor profiles, whose expectations continue to rise steeply as the industry evolves



**Above: The Sweat Union gym in Walsall offers members a vibrant and colourful changing environment
Left: 1 Rebel's innovative changing rooms show the versatility of the Craftsman team**

The creation of purpose-designed changing rooms to meet and exceed the aspiration and vision of clubs keen to retain members and attract new ones is vital in today's challenging and competitive climate.

Inspiring, innovative designs and long-proven project management capability enable Craftsman to deliver complex schemes across fitness, sport and leisure that match provision to need.

John Gibbs and the Craftsman team work closely with facilities to rethink sometimes complicated, confusing layouts to streamline access and use, applying design insights to develop changing spaces moulded to the specific requirements of members and visitors.

The Craftsman team provide invaluable advice throughout a project to help deliver optimum quality, cost and timelines, factors vital in the delivery of a streamlined process and fit-for-purpose provision.

They are experienced in the design and install of changing facilities for projects that rely on close collaboration, assembling and co-ordinating the build and interior design teams to work alongside club management.

The quality of changing provision can impact a health and fitness club's bottom line during a project, as well as afterwards. Craftsman's commitment to fully supportive customer service keeps facilities in touch and engaged during fit-outs, while helping to limit the impact of any downtime.

The resulting welcoming environment can attract new health club members, as well as leave a lasting impression of quality and convenience.

The diversity of need in club changing provision can be satisfied only by a supplier that can act as a sympathetic, listening provider who offers innovative turnkey solutions exceeding the expectations of members, visitors, managers and committees alike.

Craftsman Lockers can expertly project manage schemes that truly stand the test of time. ●

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A warmer WELCOME

The government's new strategy on sport aims to increase participation in physical activity among hard-to-reach groups. What can the sport and leisure sector do better to support this goal? **Rhianon Howells** reports

The most recent annual report from the National Benchmarking Service (NBS) had both good and bad news for local authority sport and leisure providers. On one hand, it noted a remarkable upswing in the financial efficiency of sport and leisure centres across the country. On the other hand, it found the sector as a whole is still failing dismally to increase participation among some of the most at-need groups.

Specifically, the report found that, while the sector is doing a good job of attracting women, 20- to 59-year-olds and ethnic minorities, it isn't doing nearly enough to attract 11- to 19-year-olds, people

aged over 60, disabled people or those from the lowest socioeconomic groups.

In the light of these conclusions, it's telling that one of the central goals of the government's new strategy on sport, announced last December, is to increase participation in sport and physical activity among these very same groups. As well as extending Sport England's remit to encompass children as young as five, funding will also be targeted at projects supporting all of the above groups.

So what can the physical activity sector do to support this goal of widening participation – and why isn't it doing it already?



MARTYN ALLISON
DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT
IMPROVEMENT SERVICES &
CHAIR, QUEST

The sector's continued failure to widen participation among those most likely to benefit from physical activity – namely children and young people, older people and poorer people – is of real concern.

There's mounting evidence that better financial performance in the sector is being achieved at the expense of extending participation among these hard-to-reach groups. To survive with less subsidy, contractors are focusing on middle-aged, middle-class and mid- to high-income groups who are able to afford membership schemes. Those most in need get squeezed out.

If some of the surpluses centres are now seeing were reinvested to achieve better social outcomes, this would build a stronger argument for the continuation of subsidies, and may go some way towards redressing the balance. However, constructing contracts that

generate good commercial returns and good social outcomes requires rare canny political and managerial leadership. It's even more challenging when dealing with external operators whose culture is driven by profit.

The financial pressure the industry is now under is only part of the problem. Low participation among hard-to-reach groups dates back to the birth of sports development in the 1970s. The sector has always employed people who are passionate about sport – but the people who need physical activity the most often hate sport. Asking people who love sport to sell it to those who hate it is a real challenge: they don't know how to do it and they're not willing to change. Also, facility managers have never been trained to extend the market – only to market to the same people better.

Longer life expectancies, the raising of the pension age and austerity have created a crisis in the health service, and it's clear resources must be moved into prevention quickly – in particular, into keeping people active longer. But even if we can persuade providers to channel surpluses into widening participation, I'm not convinced our managers or workforce currently have the will or skills to do it. It will require a step change in thinking to overcome decades of inertia.

The government's new sport strategy focuses on this very problem, calling on the sector to focus on those currently excluded. Sport England is now consulting on how to implement this strategy and I expect we'll see major shifts in funding priorities, delivery methodologies and measurement techniques across the sector. Perhaps effectiveness will now be valued above efficiency.

Asking people who love sport to sell it to those who hate it is a real challenge: they don't know how to do it and they're not willing to change

Martyn Allison



Fusion offers sessions tailored to specific hard-to-reach groups



NATHANIEL LENEÝ
DIVISIONAL SPORTS AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
MANAGER, FUSION LIFESTYLE

We're delighted that our Loughborough Leisure Centre has been identified by NBS as one of the

country's top-performing facilities when it comes to increasing participation among hard-to-reach groups. Fusion Lifestyle works hard to deliver quality sport and wellbeing services that are inclusive and accessible. Sport and community development are key aspects of our organisation, and all departments work together.

In line with this, our internal Leadership and Management Development Programme includes training on how to reduce barriers to participation, with workshops offered in programming, understanding customers, attracting and retaining customers, and marketing segmentation. As managers, this helps us understand how we can adapt our services to encourage targeted groups to visit our sites.

Initiatives include sessions tailored to specific groups – from walking football for the over-60s to women-only swimming sessions, which are particularly important in communities with large BME groups – and free Family Fun Days, where we put on a variety of activities and invite the community to try them out.

We also work closely with community stakeholders. In addition to our Exercise on Referral programme, we partner with local special needs schools to deliver badminton and swimming, and offer a Youth Card

Project whereby young offenders can access our facilities, initially accompanied by their social workers but later independently. Thanks to the impact of this project last year, we've just received funding for 30 individuals from the police and crime commissioner.

Far from seeing targeted groups as a drain on our resources, we see them as an untapped market, offering a great opportunity to improve people's lives while also creating loyal members and additional income. While our charitable objectives are as vital to us as maintaining a healthy financial position, it's essential the organisation generates more income than it spends. Programmes might be initially subsidised, either by Fusion or via external funding, but the longer-term goal is always to make sessions financially sustainable. We do this in several ways, with a focus on increasing participants and using volunteers to cut cost per head.

Although initiatives like Exercise on Referral might at first break even or make a loss, if participants receive great service and see an improvement to their health, they're more likely to become regulars at our gyms.

Programmes might be initially subsidised, but the longer-term goal is always to make them financially sustainable in their own right

Nathaniel Leneý



Leisure providers should seek to integrate with community services

PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



CHARLES JOHNSTON **DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY,** **SPORT ENGLAND**

Sport England strongly believes it's possible for sport and leisure providers to be financially efficient yet also extend participation and deliver

effective social outcomes – even at a time when local authorities are faced with substantial cuts.

To do this, operators first need to deliver a fully commercialised programme of activities, and then look closely at who should be paying for them. This means convincing local government commissioners for health and social care that investing in sport and leisure for certain target groups is a cost-effective alternative to the other interventions they might use to deliver their agendas – for example, drug treatment.

Sport England is currently working with operators and clinicians such as Dr William Bird to collect objective evidence of this. The health pilots we've done so far have demonstrated clear benefits, including a great reduction in the need for diabetes treatments and a marked slowdown in the onset of dementia – and associated cost of residential care – among those taking part. But we need to build that case.

One way for sport and leisure providers to achieve greater efficiencies is by co-locating and/or integrating with other community services.

Sport England is currently supporting several such projects through its Strategic Facilities Fund. The aim of this fund is to direct capital investment into local authority projects that commit to growing and sustaining community participation in sport, while also encouraging the applicants and their partners to re-invest themselves.

A good example is Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub in Warrington, which is managed by Livewire, a community interest company (CIC). In addition to sport and leisure facilities, the centre houses a GP practice, a library, a café and even the local police station.

Once inside the hub, people who might never normally set foot in a leisure centre are signing up for activities. There's also a lot more cross-commissioning, as all the service providers have a clear view of what's on offer. Through a combination of commercial time and paid-for social programmes, the centre is running at a vastly reduced public subsidy and those commissioning activities within it are getting a very cost-effective intervention.

On average, the centres we've helped through the Strategic Facilities Fund have seen their revenue increase by £750,000 a year, due not only to greater efficiencies and higher demand generated by refreshed facilities, but also the in-built social programmes. So far, we've had about 15 openings and have 50 in the pipeline, so there's a great deal of interest in this.

But we mustn't be naïve. It's up to us to give local authorities confidence that capital reinvestment in sport and leisure can produce very substantial revenues while also delivering on social goals.

Capital reinvestment in sport and leisure can produce very substantial revenues while also delivering on social goals

Charles Johnston

Start 2016 with 200 new members and over £100,000 in extra revenue

"It is clear that the CFM model to help promote and drive a **membership campaign is a tried and tested blueprint**, and throughout the campaign they communicate with you for tweaks and clarity so that it is **tailor-made to your specific needs**.

The **results for the duration of the campaign have been extremely encouraging** and have certainly met my expectations and I would **certainly have no hesitation in endorsing them for future campaigns**"



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DRIVING PARTICIPATION



Offering a friends and family group membership has been a big financial and social success



MATT BUNNELL HEAD OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING, ACTIVE STIRLING

At Active Stirling, we offer a huge range of outdoor and indoor activities to our local community, but like so many other operators, until recently we were struggling to increase or even maintain our membership figures. Historically, we saw seven months of the year with a net loss of members and just five with a net gain, leading to a slight overall reduction each year.

But after shifting our focus last year from selling memberships to widening participation, we're not only attracting and keeping more people from traditionally hard-to-reach groups, but we've also seen a dramatic increase in membership numbers and overall revenue.

Before, we had more than 20 different types of membership; now we have just four, including a

It's possible to broaden participation without hurting your bottom line. It's just a matter of changing your mindset

Matt Bunnell

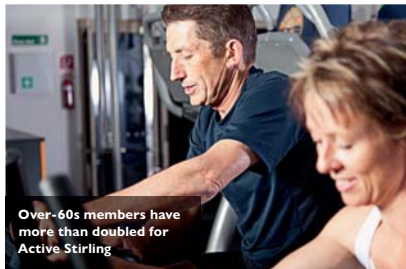
groundbreaking new group membership. For just £79 a month, this allows four people (friends or family) to join together on one membership. Working out at just £19.75 per person, this is significantly cheaper than our single adult concessionary rate of £31, and also has added benefits for retention: people don't quit their membership because they all come together.

Since launching the new memberships, our numbers have risen from around 3,000 to 6,500, of which a staggering 4,000 are group members. And while some people have unsurprisingly moved across from single adult memberships (£38), our net income is still better because they're bringing new members on board. Overall, attrition is down, retention is up and monthly membership income has increased by 30 per cent.

With regards hard-to-reach groups, our percentage of over-60s has remained at 7-8 per cent, meaning we've effectively more than doubled our numbers in this category. The percentage of concessions has also remained stable at 8-9 per cent – another doubling of numbers – and this doesn't even take into account individuals who qualify for our concessionary adult rate but take out joint or group memberships instead.

In addition, junior memberships have also doubled, and our proportion of female members has risen from 55 per cent to 58 per cent.

Our success proves that it's possible for leisure operators to broaden participation without hurting the bottom line. It's just a matter of changing your mindset. ●



Over-60s members have more than doubled for Active Stirling

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UNITED WE STAND

Too many health clubs fail to adequately cater for disabled people – but there's a small handful of operators that are leading by example. **Kath Hudson** asks them about their approach

BRIAN CARLIN
Chief executive, **Aspire**



Aspire's vision is to create a world where spinal cord injured people live as equals in society, free from environmental, social and economic

prejudice. The 'purple pound', as it's known, is worth £84bn in disposable income, but the fitness industry largely ignores this market and discriminates against it when it comes to employment.

Our health club has an IFI-approved gym, a 25m swimming pool complete with full ramp access, and a dance studio where, of the 51 classes offered, half are inclusive. Twenty seven per cent of our members have disabilities, but they account for 36 per cent of the total usage. Independently funded, we've proved this is a business model that works.

One of our USPs is that 60 per cent of our fitness team are also disabled. This is so important in conveying a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, as a common problem is the unintentional prejudice of health and fitness staff.

We export our ethos through our InstructAbility training course, which trains disabled people to be fitness instructors – staff training is a great place to start. Aspire also encourages fitness operators to sign up to the Two Ticks Positive scheme, which guarantees an interview to anyone who has the necessary qualifications and experience, even if they declare that they have a disability.



Aspire trains disabled people to become fitness instructors

60 per cent of our fitness team are disabled. It's so important, as a common problem is the unintentional prejudice of fitness staff

BEN QUILTER

Disability and inclusion manager, GLL



As a retired Paralympian who started to experience sight loss at the age of 12, I know that a lot of the time disabled people just want to blend in and be given the confidence to interact with the leisure facility in the same way as everyone else. At GLL, we believe our staff training should focus on developing understanding to help bring about this aim, and make everyone aware of individuals' needs.

GLL bases inclusive sessions on demand and need. For example, in some partnerships we run inclusive drop-in gym

sessions, with a fitness instructor on-hand to provide additional support. The aim of these sessions is to give people with disabilities an introduction to the facility, make them familiar with the settings and surroundings, and give them the confidence to come independently.

We also have community sports managers who work in an outreach capacity, getting to know groups, schools and organisations to establish what needs they have and how we can meet their requests. A popular activity is swimming lessons, and we're currently working on an aquatics programme to create a pathway for disabled people.



GLL: A focus on staff training

SOPHIA WARNER

Founder, Tribal Series



Tribal Series launched last year, with the backing of Sportsworld, to provide the first mass-participation disability sports events dedicated to the UK's disabled population. The inaugural event, a Para Tri, took place last August and four more are planned for this year: a Para Run/Push (fun run/wheelchair race), a Para Swim and two Para Tris. We're aiming for 5,000 participants across the four events, and each year we hope to add more – and more varied – events to the calendar.

There simply aren't enough opportunities out there for disabled people who want to take part in sport just for fun. While event operators are great at letting disabled people get involved, the cut-off times and equipment restrictions create unintentional barriers. Our series has no cut-off times and participants can use flippers, floats, electric and day wheelchairs, adapted cycles and other aids where needed.

Tribal Series is fundamentally about getting out there, getting active and having fun. We encourage participants to compete against themselves – everyone has a chip timer, so they know what they have to beat next time. It's the first series that allows the UK's disabled community to come together, compete and have fun on a dedicated playing field.

We hope health clubs will encourage their members to use our events as inspiring goals to work towards, and we'd



Tribal Series aims to help disabled people take part in sport just for fun

love to work in partnership with a health club chain to drive sports participation among disabled people.

In addition, our relays allow disabled and non-disabled teams to face the challenge together, as long as there's at least one person with a disability per team. This is a really great way to encourage integration and camaraderie between health and fitness club members.

Our relays allow disabled and non-disabled teams to face the challenge together



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INCLUSIVE FITNESS

► JOHN HARLING Facility manager, Portway Lifestyle Centre



The Portway Lifestyle Centre, run by Sandwell Leisure Trust, is a purpose-built leisure facility that opened in September 2013 and that incorporates a GP practice. During the planning phase we consulted with local disability groups, individuals with disabilities and a planning team on the design, access and activities, to ensure we were best supporting users with disabilities. As a result, we've just received a top-level accreditation from the IFI (Inclusive Fitness Initiative).

Facilities include a 115-station gym with a wide range of adapted equipment; a fully accessible, and very popular, 10m climbing wall; a 10m hydrotherapy pool; and a speciality sensory room.

We use different signs, colours, surface textures and technology to support users in getting around the centre as independently as possible. There are hearing induction loop systems, braille



Portway's buddy system offers support for the visually impaired

signs and a Wayfinding audible navigation tool, as well as easy access ramps and walkways with tactile paving and handrails.

The centre is also a Changing Places facility, so it has a changing bench and hoist. Added to this, all the staff have received disability awareness training to provide the best customer service.

During 2014/15, we received more than 45,000 disabled visits. This has been achieved by offering free weekday access to disability groups and individuals with a pass. We've also partnered with Sandwell Visually Impaired, and run a buddy system with volunteers providing sighted support. Additionally, we work closely with the disability development officer at Adult Services.

We use different signs, colours, surface textures and technology to support users in getting around the centre independently

VICKI BAINSAIR Health and wellbeing manager, YMCA, Romford



Being inclusive is part of our mission to transform the communities in which we work, enabling more young people to belong, contribute and thrive.

We worked with the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) to make our facility accessible, and now 25 per cent of our machines are accessible and IFI-accredited, while 12 of our 100 group exercise classes are specifically designed for those people with additional needs.

Many of our frontline staff have been trained to a level that gives them an understanding of how to interact with people with additional needs, and they're willing to go that extra mile to assist. Our fitness staff also have additional qualifications to deliver sessions directly



Bainsair: 'Operators shouldn't shy away from being inclusive'

to those with additional or specific needs, such as stroke rehabilitation, cancer referral and GP referral.

Operators shouldn't shy away from being inclusive. Speak to the clients you're trying to reach and don't be frightened of getting it wrong. Doing nothing is worse than using the wrong language or signage. ●



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WHAT WE LIVE FOR



back to basics

Few of us use our bodies as they were designed to move – but there are some functional training concepts that go back to the basic movement patterns of animals and humans alike. **Kath Hudson** reports



MovNat follows the ethos of 'be strong and be useful'

THINK WITH YOUR BODY

Discipline: MovNat

"Think with your whole body to move with your whole mind" is the MovNat philosophy, which teaches people to reconnect with their body's natural ways of moving. The end goal: to help the body to become strong and balanced as one coherent unit, and with it more resilient.

The workouts can take place either indoors or out and are based around natural human movements: crawling, lifting, carrying, walking, running, throwing, catching, climbing, jumping and landing. Founded by Erwan Le Corre in 2008, the MovNat concept was informed by the sports he took part in as a child – including activities such as rock climbing, karate, Parkour and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Another key influence was the physical training method, Méthode Naturelle, developed by French naval officer Georges Hébert in the early 1900s. With its motto of 'be strong to be useful', Méthode Naturelle focused on developing skills and strength that would be of use in the real world. MovNat is now bringing this philosophy into the modern era: "If a movement isn't helpful in everyday life, we're not very interested in it. From carrying the groceries to fleeing danger, our movements are based on need," the company confirms.

Currently there are four MovNat affiliate gyms in the US, but this is set to grow this year, with international locations also on the cards. There are already thousands of certified MovNat trainers around the world.

Fitness instructors can contact MovNat directly to undergo a training course and become a licensed trainer. The company also sells a range of small equipment that's suitable for use in MovNat classes.

www.movnat.com



MovNat is based on natural movements such as climbing

If a movement isn't helpful in everyday life, we're not interested. From carrying the groceries to fleeing danger, our movements are based on need

Staying in the same plane of motion can lead to muscle imbalances and injury; Animal Flow has been designed to break up movement patterns



BREAK DOWN, BUILD UP

Discipline: **Animal Flow**

The Animal Flow concept combines quadrupedal and ground-based movements with different elements from various bodyweight training disciplines to create a fun, challenging, multi-planar workout.

The programme includes a wide range of exercises and movement combinations, all designed to elicit specific results: increased mobility, flexibility, stability, power, endurance, skill and neuromuscular communication.

Many of the movements are multi-planar and rotational. This is important because many people now spend the majority of their working day seated, hunched over a computer, and then sit on a machine when they get to the gym. However, staying in the same plane of motion all day can lead to muscle imbalances and eventually injury; Animal Flow has therefore been designed to break up movement patterns and make the human body strong and effective while in rotation or the transverse plane.

Fitness instructors can take the Animal Flow Certification, which includes attending a two-day workshop and passing a competency test. Workshops are offered all over the world on a regular basis and group discounts are provided to clubs that want to send multiple staff members. US gym chain Equinox was an early adopter, offering Animal Flow classes to its members since 2012.

In addition, an Animal Flow Kids exercise programme is being introduced this year, as well as a new training module for small group training formats.

www.animalflow.com

Animal Flow develops flexibility and power



Movements are multi-planar and rotational

MOVEMENT, PURE & SIMPLE

Discipline: Ido Portal Method

Created by the self-styled Ido (I-do), this range of graceful and fluid movements was inspired by his early love of Afro-Brazilian Capoeira. From there, he trained with numerous movement teachers: yogis, dancers, athletes, circus performers and fighters, but found all of the disciplines to be too restrictive.

He set about creating a movement programme informed by the range of different disciplines he had trained in, to create a bigger picture – one that focused on simply moving the human body, rather than worrying about which discipline was being practised. "Specialising is great – but beyond our specialities we are all human first, movers second and only then specialists," he says.

www.idoport.com

Moves are influenced by diverse disciplines



Ido was inspired by his early love of capoeira



Specialising is great – but beyond our specialities we are all human first, movers second and only then specialists

The approach combines art and movement



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LEGEND LAUNCHES IN CANADA

Advanced recreation software is a big hit with leisure operators both sides of the Atlantic



The Legend system has specific functionality for leisure camps

Legend Recreation Software, Inc, the Canadian subsidiary of Legend Club Management Systems, has launched to extremely positive reviews from customers as it installs its first projects in the Canadian recreation software market.

Sean Maguire, managing director, Legend Club Management Systems, comments: "It's been a busy period preparing the launch and our Canadian team has done a stunning job. The first three contracts went live in December with very flattering feedback from customers and users. We now have a growing order book that we're running to keep up with. I couldn't be happier with the situation.

"We've been preparing for our Canada launch for the last 12 months. We've come to understand the similarities between our UK operators and the challenges facing their counterparts in Canada. This is great news for our business both sides of the

Atlantic because the huge investment we make in product development applies to all customers equally well."

ELIMINATE DOWNTIME

James O'Brien, director of Legend's Canadian subsidiary, Legend Recreation Software, Inc, adds: "Something that's proven really important is the ease of

switching systems to Legend. We've been able to move customers without a moment's downtime and within a very economical budget. We feel this is how it always should be. But apparently operators in Canada are regularly offline for days with upgrades and installations."

Dovercourt Recreation Association (Dovercourt), Ottawa South Community

'LIGHT YEARS AHEAD'

"Legend has given us much better control, much better reporting and easier system administration, saving us time and providing us with a level of insight we didn't have access to before.

"Legend's online systems are fantastic for improving our customer service and we can see how easily they are being adopted by our public and members. The smartphone app has been very popular too. Overall, in my experience working in the UK and in Canada, Legend is light years ahead of the competition."

Mike Tait, senior director: finance and administration – Dovercourt



Legend's smartphone app means people have access to the system wherever they are

Association (OSCA) and The Glebe Neighborhood Activities Group (GNAG) are among the first organisations to upgrade systems to Legend. The installation is for a fully integrated leisure management system, including online registrations, swimming lessons tablet, online portal, smartphone apps and facilities maintenance tablet – all in order to achieve greater efficiency and better management information, as well as to make the online registration process much easier for customers.

Mary Tsai-Davies, executive director at GNAG, comments: "We're really excited about Legend. Its team makes a great impression and the solution is going to help us in so many ways."

"Customer service is a big winner. Legend is far more sophisticated than any system we've come across. It's like moving from horse-and-cart to driving a racing car."

ENHANCING OPERATIONS

Legend recreation software provides organisations in the parks and recreation market with a single, centralised solution incorporating a central database, integrated online and smartphone bookings, kiosk, as well as specific functionality for leisure camps. Additional functionality includes sports courses and swimming lessons; membership management; ticketing; as well as advanced reporting and business intelligence applications.

Dovercourt's Mike Tait adds: "We figured that giving parents paper report cards that

POOLSIDE REPORTING

An area of significant advancement is the use of digital swimming report cards, which the Legend system has enabled.

With numerous swimming programmes and classes available for children of all ages, and progress needing to be tracked for each, Legend identified that a more practical approach was needed.



were constantly getting damp next to the poolside was not the best way for us to communicate the success and progress of their children. With help from Legend, we have become the first recreation centre to make these report cards digital at the poolside and therefore easy for parents to access securely online. It might seem an obvious innovation, but the technology is a big step forward for the recreation sector.

"We're on a steep progression curve with Legend, which will open many doors for us, and will certainly provide immense benefits for our customers as we continuously modernise our thinking."

Legend's James O'Brien concludes: "We're delighted with the welcome we've received and the enthusiasm from the market for our software and our approach. Legend prides itself in continuously investing in both our product and in engaging customers and understanding their business needs; it is this

ethos that allows us to continually innovate with a high degree of accuracy and produce technology that is truly market leading."

"We believe we have the outstanding software solution in the market, combined with the right collaborative approach that can help organisations deliver their services with greater efficiency, more cost-effectively and do so in a way that enhances end-customer engagement." ●

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FITNESS COMES TOGETHER

FIBO 2016

Two more halls, new seminars and brand new areas of focus – we look ahead to next month's event

Generating ideas and momentum for the fitness industry, and with a wide-reaching international focus, FIBO – the leading international trade fair for fitness, wellness and health – is scheduled to take place in Cologne, Germany, on 7–10 April.

Across the 160,000sq m of floor space, exhibitors will be on-hand to showcase the latest innovations and bestsellers. Meanwhile high-calibre congresses and seminars will dive into the industry's trends and challenges, including: the growth of digital and associated opportunities like personalised exercise and health management; health management in the workplace; electrical muscle stimulation (EMS); and fitness training in physiotherapy and medicine.

Today, FIBO encompasses three trade fairs under one roof: FIBO EXPERT, FIBO PASSION and FIBO POWER are three distinct industry events reaching out to different target audiences.

FIBO Expert is the international business platform for managers, distributors, suppliers, investors and decision-makers in the fitness, wellness

and health industry. Represented will be global players like Amer Sports/ Precor, gym 80, Johnson Health Tech, Life Fitness, MoveToLive, Star Trac and Technogym, all of whom have booked large areas in the Cologne Exhibition Centre.

FIBO Passion offers a special fitness experience for enthusiastic fitness fans, with lots of opportunities to get actively involved – and to shop. Finally **FIBO Power** is Europe's biggest meeting point for the bodybuilding, weight training and martial arts community.

NEW TOPICS, NEW HALLS

FIBO 2016 is growing, with two halls being added to make more room for emerging topics. FIBO EXPERT and FIBO PASSION will enhance their focus on technology in fitness studios, with a dedicated area for mobile devices and wearables in Hall 4.2.

Another trend certain to shape FIBO 2016 is electrical muscle stimulation (EMS), the centrepoint of the new Hall 5.2. Among the 17 exhibitors presenting their products and services for this market will be miha bodytec, bodyefficient, EMS GmbH, XBody Training Germany, AmpliTrain,

C.H. medical systems, e-fit, JustFit, Wav-e International, IT'S, Körperperformen and SPEED-FIT Technology.

FIBO's sports nutrition offering will get a boost too. With one month still to go to the trade fair, some 20 exhibitors have already registered and will be represented at both FIBO EXPERT – which targets fitness professionals – and at FIBO PASSION, which caters for private visitors.

CONGRESSES AND SEMINARS

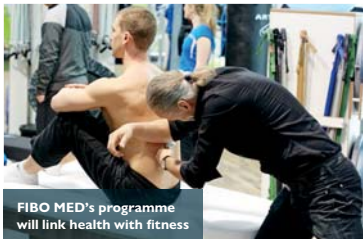
FIBO EXPERT aims to examine the top issues set to shape the future – both at the exhibitors' stands and in the supporting educational programme, which is jam-packed with premieres this year.

Kicking off proceedings on the day before the trade fair will be the European Health & Fitness Forum (see p80) – a high-level congress and networking event, with the theme at this year's congress being 'Growth through Innovation'.

At FIBO itself, the new FIBO EXPERT Hall 5.2 will include a presentation forum centred on EMS and wearables. Organised in co-operation with GuckerKolleg, the world's first EMS congress will take



FIBO EXPERT will focus on new tech such as EMS training



FIBO MED's programme will link health with fitness



FIBO PASSION is a special area for fitness fans to get involved

place across all four trade fair days. The EMS and PT Info Symposium is aimed at all licenced and personal fitness EMS trainers, EMS users, and anyone working in or serving customers in the EMS/PT segment. Lectures will explore topics such as start-ups and franchise systems, sales and marketing, education, training and nutrition, science and research, plus plenty of best practice. Admission to the symposium, which will take place in the new EXPERT Hall 5.2, is free of charge.

Another premiere, the DIFG Digital Congress, will be dedicated to the digital fitness mega-trend. Organised by the German Industry Association for Fitness and Health, the congress will explore topics such as technological developments and commercial potential, fitness management of the future, and online fitness business models. The congress will be held in Hall 5.2 on 7 April, the first day of the FIBO trade fair.

FIBO MED: FOCUS ON HEALTH

A special emphasis will once again be placed on FIBO MED, which will feature a joint programme tailored to the fitness industry and the health sector. Among the top companies represented at FIBO MED will be full-service fitness and therapy provider Ergo-fit, bio-kinematics expert five-Konzept, and back training specialist fle.xx. Numerous additional manufacturers will be on-hand to demonstrate their medical training equipment, approaches and concepts, including Swiss company

FIBO 2016 IN NUMBERS

- 10 halls
- 160,000sq m
- 900 exhibitors
- 136,000 visitors

LMT, Ludwig Artzt, Schnell Trainingsgeräte and h/p/cosmos. The extensive supporting programme will include:

- The DAASM Symposium, discussing topics such as fascia, progressive rehabilitation, nutrition and motivation
- Workshop 2.0 of the German Association for Health Management at the Workplace (BGM)
- The Physio Day, with information on exercise and training programmes for prevention, therapy and rehabilitation
- The Physio Practice of the Future
- The Speakers Lounge, with exhibitor presentations on a variety of topics

HALL 5.1: THE WORLD OF GROUP FITNESS

Trade visitors can look forward to an entire hall being devoted to group fitness for the first time – Hall 5.1. Instead of taking place on individual exhibitor stands, workouts will be presented on three main stages. This arrangement leaves plenty of space in the hall for casual business talks.

Well-known brands already booked include Zumba and Piloxing. All the major trampolene fitness providers will be on-site: Jumping Fitness from Germany, Jumping Fitness since 2001 from the Czech Republic and WORLD JUMPING from Slovakia. Other workouts on display will include small equipment training method Kettlebell AMPD, boxing and aerobics programme SparringBalls B360, GIBBON Slackfit, dance workout Fit&Funky, and Sensual Fighting Sen Fi². Martial arts fighter, trainer and actor Billy Blanks from the US, the inventor of Tae Bo, will also make his first ever appearance at the event.

WANT TO ATTEND FIBO?

Dates: 7–10 April 2016 (7–8 April is trade only)

Opening hours: 9.00am – 6.00pm

Venue: Cologne Exhibition Centre, Messeplatz 1, 50679 Cologne, Germany

Tickets: www.fibo.com/tickets

- Trade visitor day ticket Thursday or Friday €30 (€35 on-site)
- Trade visitor day ticket Saturday or Sunday €24 (€32 on-site)
- Trade visitors will receive a discount on two-day or four-day tickets

EHFF 2016

Growth through innovation: FIBO and EuropeActive announce the programme for the third European Health & Fitness Forum

The market, science, politics – all of these topics will feature at the third annual European Health & Fitness Forum. Hosted by FIBO and EuropeActive, this international fitness industry congress will take place on 6 April 2016 – the day before FIBO.

Approximately 400 leading industry delegates can look forward to a line-up of first-class speakers presenting lectures and discussions on issues concerning the future of the industry, with the overarching theme this year being 'Growing the fitness sector through innovation'.

Scientists will be on-hand to present insights into consumer trends and research, while leading representatives from manufacturers and operators alike will share their experiences.

In a move that's sure to raise awareness of the societal significance of fitness and health and for the political agenda, Tibor Navracsis will also be the first EU Commissioner ever to visit the event.

SPEAKER LINE-UP

The day will be packed full of thought leaders in their respective fields, including:

Professor Dr Carl C Rohde, who will speak on the topic of 'Future forecasting & fitness innovations'.

An internationally recognised trend watcher and cultural sociologist, Rohde has led Science of the Time (formally known as Signs of the Time) since 1992. Over the years, he and his network have worked with a kaleidoscope of international brands and companies. Rohde also lectures worldwide at universities, conventions, multinationals and international brands on the topic of the 'mentality trends' into which Science of the Time conducts research.

Professor Antonio Dávila on the topic of 'Making innovation work: How to manage it, measure it and profit from it'.

Dávila is professor of entrepreneurship and professor of accounting and control at the IESE Business School in Barcelona and teaches innovation management, entrepreneurship, management accounting and control, as well as sports management



From top: Rohde, Hollasch and Dávila will speak at the event

at universities worldwide. He earned his PhD from Harvard Business School and his MBA from IESE. His teaching and research interests focus on management systems in entrepreneurial firms, new product development and innovation, and performance measurement.

Kersten Hollasch, who will present the latest market research by EuropeActive and Deloitte in a session entitled 'The European health and fitness market in 2015: Trends, insights and information from recent developments'.

Hollasch is a corporate finance partner for Deloitte, based in Frankfurt, Germany, and focuses on transaction services for various corporate and private equity clients. He leads the industry consumer business, including the health and fitness sub-sector, for Deloitte in Germany and is part of the global leadership team in this industry. Since 1999 he has advised on more than 30 transactions in the health and fitness segment and is the author of various publications about this sector.

In his role as lead partner in private equity for Deloitte in Germany, he has successfully assisted a number of private equity players in a number of transactions.

Stephen Powell will be analysing how customer data can be used to drive sales. He will explain how data gives us the ability to make informed decisions where previously we relied on instinct – how it reduces the need for guesswork and increases the chance of getting it right.

However, data on its own (in silos) is not inherently valuable – the value comes from connecting it. This presentation will explain that, and also give some interesting case studies highlighting this connection.

Powell has been a professor at Tuck School of Business in the US since 1987. He teaches courses in management science, including the core 'decision science' course, and electives in the art of modelling and applications of simulation. ●

WANT TO ATTEND THE EHFF?

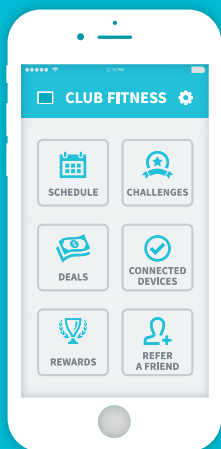
Participation fees: €279 for EuropeActive members; €289 for non-members

What's included? Beverages during the meeting, lunch, dinner and a two-day ticket (Thursday and Friday) to FIBO, as well as a free copy of the new EuropeActive publication *Growing the Fitness Sector Through Innovation*.

Tickets are available at: www.europeactive.eu/events/ehff2016

For additional details, please visit www.europeactive.eu and www.fibo.de

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RANDI ZUCKERBERG

The author, entrepreneur and media maven will demystify technology and explore social change in her IHRSA 2016 keynote presentation

You're speaking at IHRSA this month on 'exciting trends impacting your business right now'. Is the implied sense of urgency intentional?

Absolutely! Whether you're a budding entrepreneur, the founder of a start-up or a vetted business owner, you need to stay 10 steps ahead of your competition and prepare for what's going to be coming down the road over the next few years.

Technology changes so fast: it's important that you familiarise yourself with new developments *now* so you don't fall too far behind. Knowing about the trends puts you in the driver's seat.

You host a weekly radio broadcast with a panel of technology experts. What are the hot issues?

When we use technology to streamline everyday living, we tap a huge opportunity. However, as with everything else it comes with a cost. Our relationships and emotional wellbeing may suffer, and there may be ethical implications too: it seems that today, most of the digital debates on my radio show have to do with digital safety, ethics, tech addiction and cyber-identity.

But we've also discussed how to turn your dog into an internet celebrity, so the issues aren't always weighty!

What would your advice be to 'digital immigrants' – those who didn't grow up with social media and so on – on how to adjust to the new hi-tech world?

First of all, yay to us digital immigrants! I'm one of them: I grew up without cell phones, wrote my college papers by hand and knew how to read a road atlas. So my message is that it's never too late to begin.

Also, technology changes so quickly that today's experts may well feel like novices tomorrow. My advice is therefore this: Dive in, realising that you'll feel uncomfortable and overwhelmed for a bit. Identify areas you really want to focus on and ditch the others. Then revel in the glory when, after just a few months, you're the tech-savvy person in your business!

You address many of these issues in your book, *Dot Complicated: Untangling Our Wired Lives*.

What prompted you to write it?

I wanted readers know it's OK to have mixed feelings about technology, to acknowledge the massive changes we're going through and to try and figure it all out – together.

Personally I love technology. It makes our lives more convenient and brings us closer to the people and things we love. We now laugh and mourn together, meet new people and get in touch with old friends we thought we'd never hear from again. Technology and social media and have brought people together in a way we once could only imagine.

Except when they don't! The tech that should draw us closer to one another can also act as a wedge. Its virtues and iniquities can leave people feeling overwhelmed, confused and insecure.

Digital technology is still in its infancy. So OK, we've built it. Now we have to create the societal awareness that goes with it.

DON'T MISS THE DOT!

Randi Zuckerberg, a best-selling author and the founder and CEO of Zuckerberg Media, will discuss 'It's Dot Complicated: Exciting trends impacting your business' on Wednesday 23 March, during IHRSA's 35th Annual International Convention and Trade Show which takes place in Orlando, Florida, US.

Zuckerberg will guide attendees through 10 of the most exciting new developments in technology, business and leadership in an entertaining and thought-provoking presentation, which includes musical performance and audience interaction.

For more information or to register, log on to ihrsa.org/convention

Tell us about the 'fear of missing out' (FOMO), which happens when someone sees photos posted of an event they weren't invited to. Could clubs use FOMO in their own marketing?

Personal stories engage people, and the 'I did it, so can you' way of marketing is particularly effective in the fitness industry. Use social media and testimonials to demonstrate that exercise, fitness and healthy living are great for people of all

If there's anything that technology is really going to disrupt, it's how we stay healthy and how we heal

ages, shapes and sizes. Use social media to promote your programmes, health-related contests and giveaways. And encourage your members to use it to share stories about their workout successes.

But remember that FOMO isn't always a good thing. You don't want to use it in such a way that people actually feel left out. The goal is to invite them in.

More and more clubs are going to be employing Millennials – young people who grew up with social media. Your advice for managing them successfully?

They tend to be entrepreneurial, with a skillset that's valuable to any business, so empower them. Don't squash their creativity. Millennials want to be heard.

Try to create a work environment that they feel comfortable participating in. Let different people take over your social media, test new marketing campaigns and try other things. Have a quarterly 'new business idea' challenge. And use data and performance metrics to provide feedback, similar to the kind your members receive when they use a piece of equipment.

Clubs are also very eager to attract more of this group as members. Again, your advice?

To begin with, post a survey to find out what Millennials are looking for in a club. You don't have to accommodate every whim but I'm sure that, at the very least, they'd appreciate some charging docks and free wifi in the locker rooms.

How, in general, has technology changed the relationship clubs have with their members?

Clubs now have an opportunity to connect more deeply with their



Zuckerberg believes that clubs have a great opportunity to connect with members outside the facility, using social media and technology

customers, even after they've left the club and are going about their daily lives. Operators should take advantage of this new, ongoing relationship by, for instance, using social media to provide prospects and members with interesting, useful information.

Finally, what aspect of the global technological revolution do you find most promising?

I really do believe that the expansion of technology will revolutionise health – from transplants using 3D printed organs to online networks of physicians for people, such as those in rural areas, who are most in need of healthcare. If there's anything that technology is really going to disrupt, it's how we stay healthy and how we heal. ●

ABOUT IHRSA

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

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

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Future leaders

Geraldine Tuck, ukactive operations director, outlines a brand new partnership that aims to develop true leaders for the fitness sector

How can we ensure we have the best managers to lead the sector forward and inspire millions more to get active? How can we address the issue of the revolving door between gym floor and boardroom, whereby staff all too often progress through their career with little training and development?

In my view, it's crucial that those who show potential to lead their businesses – and who've shown a commitment to this sector from the very beginning – are able to work their way up and are given the expertise to truly make a difference. It's what makes our sector special and I owe my own longevity in this sector to it.

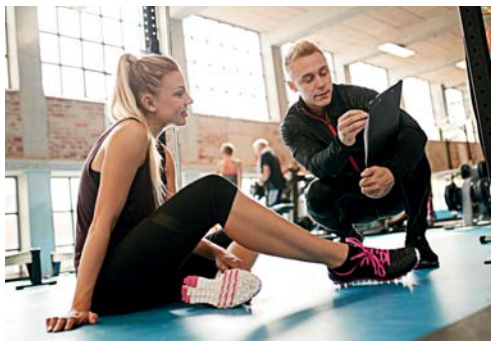
BACK TO SCHOOL

In discussions with our major members, we've been struck by the ease with which they identify their highest potential employees. However, until now there has never been a way in which to support these potential high-fliers so they can fulfil their potential. What we've been missing is a finishing school – a centre of excellence – that can help the best rise further and faster.

The programme targets those who have immense potential for leadership, and who are ready to take the next step

As a result, ukactive will be joining forces with IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain, to design a leadership programme aimed at developing Future Leaders. We're expecting to welcome potential leaders with at least three to five years of management experience.

The programme is unashamedly geared towards those who have immense potential for leadership and who are progressing quickly through their respective organisations – ready to take the next step on their way to leading a



The industry needs to nurture and develop new leaders for the future

team, managing the board or playing a role in guiding our sector to success.

In a nutshell, Future Leaders is a year-long programme of mentoring, coaching and support, with a week-long training and development programme looking in depth at where the sector is today and where it's going. It will explore how tech is reshaping the health and fitness market, the impact of the main trends on the sector, and how the global economy can influence the physical activity sector.

It's about recognising what the sector needs to progress and developing the leadership to deliver this.

FIT FOR PURPOSE

Future Leaders gives us the opportunity to use world-class academic expertise to upskill those who've already shown dynamism and enthusiasm for working in our sector. Individuals who graduate from the Future Leaders programme – and the businesses they represent – will benefit from accelerated leadership skills, a deeper command of management, new digital

and customer strategies for growth, and exceptional networking opportunities.

This programme is well-timed as we continue to develop the training of fitness professionals, ensuring our workforce is fit for purpose. We hope that, by starting to fill the gaps at the top, we'll see the sector strengthened through and through. ●

ARE YOU A FUTURE LEADER?

There are a maximum of 40 places on the Future Leaders programme, and these will be assigned on an application-only basis. Anyone interested in applying to join the programme should contact Geraldine Tuck, ukactive operations director: Geraldinetuck@ukactive.org.uk



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Fitness at the core

Core the Gym – an independent club in Maidstone, UK – has worked with equipment manufacturer Core Health & Fitness to create a space that's dedicated to the member experience

Core the Gym opened at the start of January and is already ranked as one of the top gyms in Maidstone, Kent, attracting over 1,500 members in its first few weeks of operation.

The new club is independently owned and run by local businessman Jay Atkins. Atkins has spent 15 years in the industry having previously worked at DLL as operations project manager, and has always dreamed of opening his own club.

The gym is located in the Mall Shopping Centre in Maidstone and oozes an urban industrial look and feel, with exposed brick walls and ventilation units. The walls are decorated with graffiti from a local artist.

AN INVITING SPACE

The design of Core the Gym maximises the available space in the 10,000sq ft club, with a wide variety of training areas on offer including functional and free weight zones. The gym has a functional fitness zone from Impulse, with a rig and accessories supplied by Origin Fitness – including TRX, boxing bags and battle ropes for the ultimate HIIT session.

Meanwhile the cardio equipment faces the gym floor, so those who seek the familiarity of a treadmill can simultaneously watch what goes on in the functional and weight training areas – this with a view to ultimately encouraging members to try out new equipment and workouts.

Atkins chose Star Trac as the main cardio equipment supplier for the superior biomechanics and open platform technology. The new cardio deck also features Soft Trac triple cell cushioning on the treads for maximum shock absorption.



Exposed brickwork and ventilation give a modern industrial feel



We wanted to create a unique space that focused on the members - Jay Atkins



MEMBERS COME FIRST

The main focus for the gym and its staff is member wellbeing. There are no staff offices or private areas, and every inch of the gym is dedicated to user experience and fitness equipment. All staff are highly qualified fitness professionals with a focus on encouraging members to be health aware as opposed to body-conscious.

Meanwhile, members can take advantage of the staff all being qualified

PTs, with free help and advice on offer. For full PT sessions, freelance personal trainers are also available to be booked on request.

Standard membership costs £19.99 a month with no contract or joining fee.

Atkins comments: "We wanted to create a unique space that focused on the members; we take great pride in our staff, our personal trainers and most importantly our members."

He continues: "Core Health & Fitness was the natural supplier of equipment for us. Its consultative approach to fitness with design, layout and equipment selection was second to none, focusing on the needs of the gym and not its own sales targets. The team at Core Health & Fitness took the time to create different layouts to maximise the space and sought high quality fitness partners to ensure the very best was on offer."

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There are no offices in the club – all space is dedicated to the member experience

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One in the bank

The new-look gym at the London headquarters of BNP Paribas offers users eye-catching, contemporary changing areas created by Safe Space Lockers

When one of the top-rated banks in the world requires lockers, it won't settle for anything less than the best.

Safe Space Lockers has just put the finishing touches on a £27,000 refurbishment at the corporate gym located in the headquarters of BNP Paribas – leaders in global banking and financial services – in central London, UK.

A MODERN TOUCH

The brief from BNP Paribas was to freshen things up and move away from the traditional oak or wood panelled changing rooms. It wanted a modern look with clean lines.

Safe Space Lockers replaced the old lockers with classic Formica laminate coloured products – great looking, and also practical and highly durable. Different colours have been used in the men's and women's changing areas, with the use of three shades creating a contemporary look. The rooms don't just feel bigger, but brighter and fresher too.

Safe Space Lockers also recommended the high quality yet affordable feel of the Lowe and Fletcher DCL digital lock – easy to use, reliable, highly durable and with no need for keys.

Michael Flatter, hospitality & catering manager for BNP Paribas, is over the moon with the final result. "The incredible use of colour and design has transformed the spaces from being 'just changing rooms' into aesthetically pleasing, inspiring areas where our staff are happy to be," he says. "I'm absolutely delighted with the result we've achieved and wouldn't hesitate in using Safe Space Lockers again."

He continues: "This was the second time I've used Safe Space Lockers in the refurbishment of our in-house fitness centre. On the first occasion, the company was recommended to us and did a very professional job in providing a modern solution to our ageing lockers."

"On this occasion, the whole gym was undergoing an upgrade and it was my pleasure to recommend Safe Space to our contractors, who engaged with managing director Dominic Hyett and his team to supply and install a much needed upgrade to our tired facility."



It's the second project at the bank's London HQ for Safe Space Lockers



The finish matches BNP Paribas' business standards – naturally very high - Dominic Hyett



MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Safe Space's Hyett comments: "It was great to be invited back to work with the BNP Paribas team once again."

"We received some great feedback from Michael last time round, when we supplied lockers and cubicles in 2011. On this occasion, we were given a brief to

supply the company with a contemporary and modern changing room."

He concludes: "The result has been well received by the client and the workforce at BNP Paribas, who all agree the finish matches their business standards – naturally very high."

www.safespacelockers.co.uk



Three shades give a modern feel to the digital access lockers

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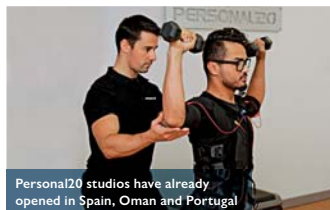


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A stimulating subject

Electric Muscle Stimulation (EMS) training is a growing trend. We check out the latest product news



Personal20 studios have already opened in Spain, Oman and Portugal

A NEW FRANCHISE

A new EMS personal training studio franchise been launched by the founders of Vivafit, catering for both men and women and called Personal20. Studios have already opened in Spain, Oman and Portugal, and another will open in June in Washington DC, US. The new franchise package includes the EMS machine and jackets, specific EMS training, training in sales, marketing, operations and customer service, store approval, layout and store environment design, and ongoing marketing campaigns for social media and print.

Vivafit is the exclusive distributor of the E-fit EMS machine for Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **VIVAFIT**



bodytech says its products drive success for all commercial EMS sites

EXPANDING THE PORTAL

EMS manufacturer miha bodytec is introducing its new i-body electrode system, designed for ongoing commercial use with its EMS training method.

It's also expanding the miha bodytec LogX online portal – an implementation, management and control tool for commercial EMS providers. LogX includes scheduling, membership administration and online device management all from a single source and, says miha bodytec MD Jürgen Decker, is "perfectly harmonised" with the product. He adds: "We're offering a comprehensive portfolio of products and services that enable every commercial provider of EMS training to be successful."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **MIHA**



AmpliTrain's frequency targets the cell as well as the nerve

A HAPPY MEDIUM

AmpliTrain EMS suits, which will be exhibited at FIBO 2016, use a modulated medium frequency of electronic stimulation that works inside muscle cells and deep within the muscle, says Beate Rösch, AmpliTrain's technical MD.

Rösch explains: "Our AmpliTrain equipment is the first on the market to use a modulated medium frequency, which directly targets not just the nerve but the cell as well. This allows us to achieve a deep penetration effect."

"Whether it's our suits, electrodes, devices or programmes, our technology and materials are state of the art in every area." Products are suitable for many training goals, including weight loss, endurance and muscle building.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **AMPLITRAIN**



XBody will be an exhibitor in FIBO's new EMS area this year

PREPARE FOR A PREMIERE

XBody Training, based in Germany, will be launching a new product at FIBO 2016. The company behind the EMS trainer XBody will be among the exhibitors in FIBO's new EMS area. Managing director Csaba Nyers says: "We'll celebrate the world premiere of a very special product at FIBO 2016, but that's all I can say about it for now."

He adds: "Virtually anyone can perform EMS workouts, regardless of whether exercisers have prior experience, whether they're in good shape or physically impaired or disabled."

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **XBODY**

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'Fat but fit' is a myth

It's better to be slim and unfit than obese and exercise regularly, according to major new study

For a number of years, scientists have believed it doesn't matter too much if you're overweight, so long as you exercise. It was felt that, if you have a high degree of aerobic fitness, this can go some way towards compensating for the challenges brought on by obesity. In other words, the consensus has been that it's possible – and indeed OK – to be 'fat but fit'.

However, a major new study based on 1.3 million Swedish men has turned this notion on its head, claiming that being 'fat but fit' is a myth and that it won't prevent people from premature death.

Military precision

Professor Peter Nordström and his team from Umeå University in Sweden used records from the armed forces as the basis for their study – the largest of its kind to date. They looked at the details of men who had been conscripted between 1969 and 1996, and who had an average age of 18.

When signing up to the forces, each man had to undertake a fitness test on an exercise bike to determine their physical capabilities. The test involved cycling with increased resistance until exhaustion. The weight, height and BMI of each recruit was also noted, giving an indication of whether or not they were obese at the time of joining the armed forces.

The researchers then tracked the men's records over the next 29 years to see if any of them had died – and if so, at what age and what the causes of death were.

Busting the myth

The results of the study were published in the peer-reviewed *International Journal of Epidemiology* in December 2015*.

Over the course of the study, Nordström and his team noted 44,300 deaths, and they found that men who were fit as adolescents



Fit people have a lower risk of death, but only if their BMI is good too

– when they first joined the armed forces – were far less likely to pass away in the follow-up period than those who did little or no exercise pre-joining. Participants in the upper echelons of aerobic fitness (in the highest fifth) had a 51 per cent lower risk of death compared to those in the lowest fifth. They were 80 per cent less likely to die from drug or alcohol abuse, 59 per cent less likely to kill themselves, and 45 per cent less likely to die from heart disease.

But – and here's the crucial point – the advantages of physical activity were undone if the men were overweight. Even

the fittest obese individuals were still 30 per cent more likely to die prematurely than those who were slim.

Nordström says: "Low aerobic fitness in late adolescence is associated with increased risk of early death. The results suggest that low BMI in early life is more important than high physical fitness with regard to reducing the risk of early death."

Nevertheless, the basic findings remain: those who were fit as adolescents had a reduced risk of death. However, it's clearly important to maintain a healthy weight too – being 'fat but fit' is no longer an option. ●

The results suggest that low BMI in early life is more important than high physical fitness with regard to reducing the risk of early death

Lead researcher Peter Nordström

*Nordström, P et al. Aerobic fitness in late adolescence and the risk of early death: a prospective cohort study of 1.3 million Swedish men. *International Journal of Epidemiology*. December 2015.

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