

# THE VOICE

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE GOLD'S GYM FRANCHISEE ASSOCIATION

## AN INTERVIEW WITH SHAUN SMITH

March/April 2012



[www.ggfa.info](http://www.ggfa.info)

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HELLO EVERYONE!

Our final GGFA Regional Workshop Q1 2012 was last week. I have been wrong more than right in my life but you know when you have a true gut feeling about things, your intuition is on target. This happened with the workshops. Observing Medallia results and listening to owners, I did believe that a customer service workshop, if done properly, could potentially be of great value to our members in many layers. So, I went to the only person I know that is the expert on this topic. Early in 2011, Blair McHaney and I began discussing the possibility of what this could look like and what could be the results. Over a year later, Blair created and delivered an experience unlike anything we've ever done before and has set a new standard we must continue to explore. Without Blair, this simply could not have happened and I want to thank him for sharing his expertise, his love for all of you and for his pioneering efforts which give us insight and belief we can do anything. I want to thank our supporting suppliers for helping to make it happen. Thanks to the incredibly dedicated GGFA staff. And, I want to thank all of the owners who had the faith and trust that this event would be the best use of their time and money along with bringing their staff. This is why I get up every day.

And speaking of awesome Franchsiees, this month's feature is Shaun Smith from South Carolina. I've known Shaun over ten years and have watched him grow and become very successful. He's a GGFA Advisory Board member. I'm very proud of him and excited that we get to share his story with you.

Be sure to read about our big upcoming events, the Gold's Gym International 2012 Convention and the 2012 GGFA Annual Owners' Conference. If you haven't inked these in your calendar, promise to do it today! And also make your plans early to submit for the convention awards in your own special category!

Owners, if you plan to be at IHRSA, please shoot me an email and we'll send you an invitation to the GGFA annual cocktail reception. It's Thursday evening 6-7:30pm. Also, Y'all need to know that your GGFA Executive Team will be rolling up our sleeves for the seventh year in a row for the all day intense Strategy Meeting. There's much pre-planning for it as we go armed with thoughts and suggestions on how to help you over the next year and how to peer into the future too. It's facilitated by GGFA Think Tank expert, Dan McGraw. Dan gets us motivated and we get it done! We'll publish the results in late March, so watch for them!

We have some great articles this month from industry experts, so check it out and pass them to your staff where pertinent!

See you all very soon!

*Ginger Collins*



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**COMPETITION.** Our industry has never been more competitive than it is at this time. From Big Box competitors, to low-cost competitors, to a variety of small studios offering many different workouts, never in our history have consumers had more choices as to how to workout and where to spend their fitness dollars.

**DIFFERENTIATION.** It seems to me and many others that I speak to within the industry and throughout the Gold's Gym family, that this word has more meaning than ever before. Fitness (using equipment and machines) has essentially become commoditized and in many markets has become entirely price

driven. I do believe that this creates an excellent business opportunity in certain markets and whether this is a good thing or bad thing for the industry is certainly a worthy debate, but the fact remains that to stand out and be able to compete better, you need to find a way to differentiate yourself and distance yourself from the competition. Today's fitness consumer is demanding and wants a lot of value for their dollar. It's up to us to deliver.

**CULTURE.** There are many differentiators out there to help Gold's Gym stand out against the competition. As members of the Gold's Gym family, I believe the family culture that exists amongst our gym owners and permeates to our staff and members within our gyms is vital to our success. Our family atmosphere and the way so many of us give back to the community is something that is unique and allows us to stand for something that is even bigger than just a membership. This is the "Gold's Gym Way". Our first ever GGFA Regional Workshops where we learned about customer service in a way that is unique and clearly a differentiator was a huge success. Many thanks to our Ginger, our GGFA staff and especially to Blair McHaney for presenting information that will change and improve our businesses as well as impact our company culture for many years to come.

**PROGRAMMING.** Perhaps the ultimate differentiator in terms of the nuts and bolts of our facilities. Developing a variety of programs within our gyms and our communities that meet consumer needs will help you and your staff develop relationships with your members that can not be duplicated or replaced by the competition.

**REVENUE PER MEMBER.** As the battle for new memberships in many markets becomes harder, revenue per member and profit centers within our gyms becomes more and more important. We have to find more ways to meet the needs of our members who are coming into our gyms and to monetize that relationship (in a good way!) so that we are providing more service and increasing our income streams.

**OPPORTUNITY.** There is always opportunity and in talking to many owners as I do, some markets are more difficult at this moment and others are vibrant and growing. Many people are looking at their business models and finding the best way to evolve them if they haven't done so already. I want to note in this area that GGI is working very hard on the

Gold's Gym Express model and providing it as an opportunity for franchisees who would like to grow using this concept. Gold's Gym Capital is getting deals done for franchisees who need assistance with financing so they are a resource that I encourage you to look into. And your GGFA is working non-stop to provide you with educational opportunities, workshops, webinars, valuable information, communication and so much more. GGFA will continue to keep you posted on all of these opportunities and all we ask is that you learn about them, utilized them if they fit your business needs and let us know what we can do to help.

What are you doing about the competition, differentiation, your culture, programming and revenue per member? We would like to hear from you as one of the many benefits of being part of the GGFA and the Gold's Gym family is our ability to share information and help each other. Please be on the look out for a future email from the GGFA where we will encourage you to respond and join in on this important two-way conversation.

I look forward to seeing all of you at a future regional workshop, IHRSA, convention and our signature event, your GGFA Owner's Conference.

All the best,  
*Mike Epstein*  
President, GGFA

## GGFA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

<b>MIKE EPSTEIN</b> , President Gold's Gym Paramus, NJ	<b>ADAM PONZIO</b> , Director Gold's Gyms Hamilton Mill, Peachtree Corners, & Lawrenceville, GA
<b>BARRY FIELD</b> , Vice President Gold's Gyms Pawtucket & East Greenwich, RI	<b>SKYE KAISS</b> , Director Gold's Gym Regina & Regina South, Saskatchewan, Canada
<b>JOYCE FREEMAN</b> , Secretary Gold's Gym Camp Hill, PA	<b>JOHN CUSTARD</b> , Director Gold's Gym Ashburn, Herndon & Sterling, VA
<b>GINGER COLLINS</b> , GGFA Executive Director	<b>ELIUD GARCIA</b> , Director Gold's Gyms of Laredo, Mission, McAllen, Harlingen, TX

## GGFA DIRECTORS EMERITUS

<b>GORDON JOHNSON</b> , Gold's Gyms Douglasville & West Cobb, GA	<b>BLAIR McHANEY</b> , Gold's Gyms Wenatchee & East Wenatchee, WA
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The GGFA Advisory Board is comprised of respected Franchisees with outstanding records of leadership, diligence, and commitment. With recent initiatives successfully in place, the 2012 GGFA Advisory Board will be focusing on values and benefits of the Association that are currently being discussed and designed for the Franchisee members in the upcoming year.

The ongoing success of the Franchisee Association depends on leaders such as these preserving and ensuring the continuity of experienced management of the Association. The Advisory Board is an organization that will play a decisive role in shaping the future of our Brand, Gold's Gym.

We thank the 2012 GGFA Advisory Board for committing their time and contributions to the success of our Franchisee members in the upcoming year.

## 2012 ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

**BRENT ANDERSON**, Gold's Gyms of Wenatchee, WA

**WILLY BANOS**, Gold's Gyms of Culver City, Hollywood, N. Hollywood, Los Angeles, Simi Valley, Fullerton, West Covina & Thousand Oaks, CA

**STACE BEECHAM**, Gold's Gym of Gadsden, AL

**BRYCE BERRY**, Gold's Gyms of Clifton and Grand Junction, CO

**JOHN HAMILTON**, Gold's Gyms of Bothell, Issaquah, and Redmond, WA

**JOE HARRISON**, Gold's Gyms of Lorton, Woodbridge & Fredricksburg, VA and Waukesha, Milwaukee & Fitchburg, WI

**KIM KENYON**, Gold's Gyms of Fishkill, Lagrange (Poughkeepsie), and Newburgh, NY

**AMIR KHAYAMI**, Gold's Gym Brossard, QC

**MIKE KRONGAARD**, Gold's Gyms of Richmond (Westend, Arboretum, Midlothian), Roanoke, Staunton, Fredricksburg, Warrenton, Cascades, & Ashburn

**STEPHEN LANGDON**, Gold's Gyms of San Angelo & Midlands, TX

**WILLIAM LIA**, Gold's Gyms of Albany, Clifton Park, Latham, and Niskayuna, NY

**TODD LEVINE**, Gold's Gyms Rochester & Webster, NY

**TOM MULLER**, Gold's Gym Syracuse, Dewitt & Liverpool, NY

**BRYAN MURPHY**, Gold's Gyms of Houston, Kingwood, Conroe and The Woodlands, TX

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### GGFA REGIONAL WORKSHOPS A SUCCESS!

*During the first quarter of 2012, franchisees met in Dallas, Atlanta, Seattle and New Jersey to begin a process of mutually educating one another on how to deliver great customer experiences, differentiate from competitors, and create loyal, lifelong fans.*

*A note from GGFA Executive Director, Ginger Collins:*

“The GGFA Regional Workshops, “Owning the Customer Experience”, have been completed and we are on the next part of the journey! All owners have six “homework” assignments and the GGFA will act as the dropbox or curator as each is completed from each territory. So far, I observed in each meeting that the Franchisees were very similar from all over the country in their thoughts and results which is very cool!

You’ve heard me say that owners share a certain DNA and it continues to be true in the findings of the Regionals. For those Owners who volunteer to share their assignment conclusions, we are sending friendly reminders as the staggered target dates approach. The last date is August 31<sup>st</sup> for the New Jersey attendees (since this was the last workshop) and after we have had a chance to assemble all assignments from all owners, we will publish the overall results. It will be very exciting to hear about this and to meet back for the next step in for this very important initiative!”

Hear What Others Had to Say:



Skipp Johnson, Gold’s Gym  
Douglasville, GA



Eliud Garcia, Gold’s Gym  
Laredo, TX



Nancy Capp, Gold’s Gym  
Myrtle Beach, SC



Pleasant Lewis, Gold’s Gym  
Orlando, FL





## THE GOLD'S GYM CHALLENGE UPDATE



The 2012 Gold's Gym Challenge competition has almost reached the mid-point! 180 teams representing 240 gyms combining franchise and corporate locations are in the running! With the total prize pool of \$75,000, there is a lot of excitement surrounding the competition! Gold's Gym International and the Gold's Gym Franchisee Association have partnered in the event, so the teams have all the support of both organizations behind them.

Many of the teams are once again using the new online tool specifically designed by Visual Fitness Planner. Participating gyms do not need to be Visual Fitness Planner clients, but are able to enter and monitor the progress of their Challengers during at the beginning, at the mid-point and at the conclusion of their 12-week transformation journey. Teams have also been able to view the numbers of Challengers per team, which continues to spur the competitive spirit!

### NEW FOR 2012, THE SHOW US YOUR JOURNEY ONLINE CONTEST

GGI recently announced the launch of "Show Us Your Journey." Whether it's shaping up for a sport, losing weight, or overcoming a physical challenge, Gold's Gym recognizes that it's not just about the "before" and "after" photos when it comes to a fitness transformation – it's about the journey, the hard work and the sacrifice that it takes to get from one photo to the other.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, six candidates who were selected from across the country began to chronicle their fitness journeys through blog post updates, videos and images for a chance to potentially be featured in the Stronger Than ad campaign. Click on the link to the new Gold's Gym tumblr blog to learn more about the candidates and follow their progress - <http://goldsgymblog.tumblr.com/>

### 2012 NATIONAL PRIZE POOL BREAKDOWN

If you have not entered a team this year, plan to join next year! The \$75,000 Prize Pool for 2012 includes \$6,500 to be awarded to the top 5 male and top 5 female contestants in each of the age categories (18-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50-59 / 60+). The Grand Champion male and female will also receive special recognition. In addition, the top team will win \$10,000. Teams may also award local prizes to their top winners.

### 2012 GOLD'S GYM CHALLENGE RESOURCES

For Team Leaders and their staff, there are several valuable resources available through GGI and the GGFA. Registration is closed but here are the links to the tools for this year:

1. Challenge Resources are on the GGFA website at [www.ggfa.info](http://www.ggfa.info)
2. Special Challenge Web site for participants designed to keep them engaged! We have created a special web site, [www.goldsgym.com/challenge](http://www.goldsgym.com/challenge) providing Challenge participants with exclusive content, tips and tools to keep them motivated throughout their 12 weeks.
3. Exclusive Educational Webinars for Challenge Participants. We have been holding special webinars throughout the Challenge exclusively for participants. Lead by celebrity trainers on the Gold's Gym Fitness Institute, they will cover topics ranging from goal setting to staying motivated to nutrition.
4. Wrap-up and Submission for National Judging webinars are being presented by the GGFA and GGI. All teams should make this a must to be fully informed of the submission process. The submission deadline for teams to submit their contestant packages to the GGFA Office for the National Judging is Friday, May 11, 2012. All packages must be received in the GGFA Office by this date.

### THE CHALLENGE IS FOR EVERYONE!

For more information, or answers to questions about this year's competition or to look ahead to next year, contact via phone or email:

Dave Reiseman  
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[asimpson@vfp.us](mailto:asimpson@vfp.us)  
Ph: 210-827-3011

### THANK YOU 2012 GOLD'S GYM CHALLENGE SPONSORS!



## ANNOUNCING THE GGFA NAVIGATOR

The GGFA Navigator is a tool to help you make the most of your time while attending the four major GGFA events: IHRSA, Gold's Gym Convention, Club Industry and the Owners' Conference.

Use the Navigator this month for IHRSA. Everything you need for IHRSA is available on the Navigator.

In addition to important documents about IHRSA, this page lists our vendors in the GGFA Supplier Partnership Network (SPN) with specially created ads for IHRSA and the GGFA!

You can access the Navigator directly from the GGFA website.

GGFA website > Franchisees > GGFA Event Navigator (page)

[Click Here](#) to be taken directly to GGFA Navigator.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### 2012 GOLD'S GYM INTERNATIONAL FRANCHISEE CONVENTION

July 16-18, 2012

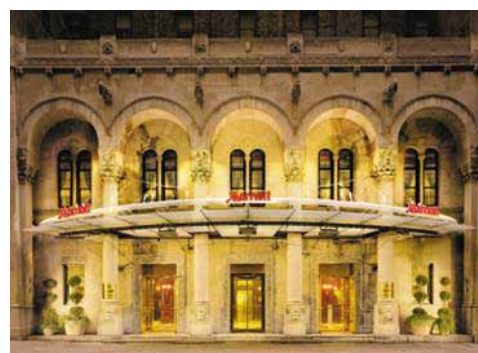
Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV  
Awards Submission deadline will be late May.



### 2012 GGFA OWNERS' CONFERENCE

October 1 & 2, 2012

New York Marriott East Side  
525 Lexington Avenue at 49th Street  
New York, New York 10017



## TALES OF THE GOLD'S GYM TOWEL

Stephen and Dorothy Langdon, owners of Gold's Gyms San Angelo and Midland, TX, pose with the towel across the street from their home. They live across from a state park.



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## SPOTLIGHT ON GOLD'S GYM MEMBER IN BELLMORE, NY

*"Kristen's drive and perseverance unheard of. A story like this is why I am a Gold's Gym franchisee. These stories are found in every Gold's Gym across the world, and we sometimes forget because we get so caught up in the business. Stories like these are the stories of Gold's Gym," states Glen Morale, Gold's Gym owner of 20 years. Below is a letter from the member's father to Gold's Gym International, along with a video archiving Kristen's journey.*

Last April, 2011, my daughter Kristen was injured playing in a basketball tournament at Fordham University. It was considered the "Kentucky Derby" of basketball. College Scouts were in attendance, looking for potential recruits and scholarship offers. Kristen has always been athletic and has always kept her self in top condition. The injury could not have occurred at a worse time in her basketball career.

After doctor consultation, we faced the facts that she had completely torn her ACL and needed immediate surgery. We were also advised that she would be off the court for approximately one year. After explaining her college potential, the doctor said based on her physical condition, she might come back early, if she works very hard in rehabilitation.

This was devastating news to Kristen and us. We had watched her achieve MVP awards and player of the year awards, year after year. Basketball was a passion for Kristen, but also for my wife and I, it was a long time sacrifice

-- weekends, vacations, etc. were always based on basketball schedules and tournaments.

As we left the doctor, I told Kristen she would be back and this was simply a minor set back. I decided to video her progress.

Kristen began PT the same day of her surgery. It was very painful. She had to learn to walk again on the leg. She had absolutely no control of her muscles. We started at Gold's Gym as soon as the doctor gave the ok. I videotaped a few times, just to help her see progress. She worked very hard. Two hours of physical therapy, 4x a week. She would go directly to Gold's and work out an additional 2 hours every day.

Each day she showed improvement and with the aide of a leg brace, she was given the green light to play "carefully." She got back on the court and had a lot of "rust" to shake and had difficulty adjusting to the leg brace. At each game she showed improvement.

Several colleges expressed interest,

and in December, Kristen was awarded a full scholarship to play basketball at Adelphi University.

On January 12th, 2012, she scored her 1000th point for the high school team. On Feb 13, 2012, her team won conference champs and headed to the semifinals.

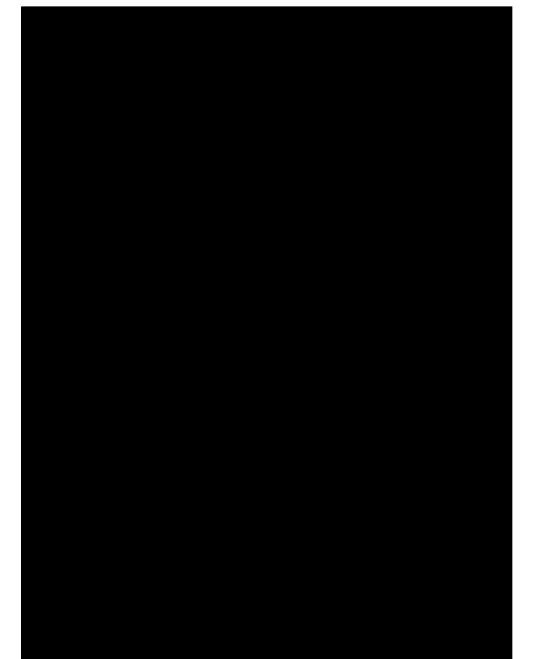
We could not have done any of this with out the help from so many people: her doctors, her therapists, basketball trainers, and Glen Morales of Gold,s Gym Bellmore, NY.

[Click Here to view her video.](#)

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## AN INSIDER'S PERSPECTIVE: A FRANCHISEE SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH GOLD'S GYM CAPITAL

*Since its inception, Gold's Gym Capital has helped many franchisees attain lending for fitness and non-fitness equipment, build-out and even the franchise fee. For many, opening a new gym or revamping an existing one would have been unthinkable without the support of Gold's Gym Capital. Here is a look at one of these stories:*

**JOHN MORGAN**  
**OWNS AND OPERATES A NEW EXPRESS**  
**GYM IN NORMAL, ILL. AND A FULL**  
**AMENITY CLUB IN BLOOMINGTON, ILL.**

When we first heard about the new Gold's Gym Express concept, we honestly wouldn't have given it a second look if the Gold's Gym Capital program wasn't introduced at the same time. An Express gym locally sounded like a great idea, but we knew how difficult it would be to secure financing and found the process itself to be very complex. We knew that packaging our story would be the biggest challenge in securing financing, that's why we were excited that Gold's Gym Capital was available to provide support and guidance for our continued growth of the Gold's Gym brand.

From the start, Chuck Lemar of Gold's Gym Capital took the time to intently listen to our company's history and grasp our financial situation. He wanted to make sure lenders weren't looking at an opportunity but at the people, so it was important for him to completely understand our financial requests and circumstances.

With his decades of experience in the industry, Chuck gets lenders and knows

exactly what they're looking for and what types of questions they are going to ask. It was reassuring to have him on our side, guiding us along the way—telling us what documents to complete and by when, putting together financial presentations that were attractive to lenders, and meeting with lenders on our behalf are just some of the few ways he helped us attain financing.

With Chuck's help, we were able to secure financing on great terms for all fitness and non-fitness equipment needed to open our new Express gym. This included 86 pieces of cardio equipment, two entire lines of selectorized fitness equipment, a full room of free weights, as well as all lockers, movie theatre equipment, TVs and sound equipment, among other items.

Without the guidance and support from Chuck and the Gold's Gym Capital team, opening an Express club would not have been possible. Now, the gym is open and we have even bigger plans to expand locally with the help of Gold's Gym Capital.



*To contact Gold's Gym Capital, please contact Chuck Lemar at [CLemar@goldsgym.com](mailto:CLemar@goldsgym.com)*

*The Gold's Gym Advertising Advisory Committee met on January 24, 2012. Below is a summary of the key items discussed. If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of the franchisee committee members. Remember, franchisee feedback is very important to the success of these initiatives.*

1. New Advertising Creative Will Be Developed in 2012 and Franchisee Feedback Will be Key. We will be evolving the current "Stronger Than" campaign.

2. Marketing to Current Members is Playing A Bigger Role Than Ever. Many committee members shared they are seeing a bigger share of their revenue come from marketing to their current members. This includes tactics like buddy referrals, household add-ons, PT promotions and more. We will use this information to help steer some of our strategy moving forward.

3. "The Last Mile"

A. The committee shared with GGI and the agency that while a lot of the current creative is made from an artistic/slogan viewpoint, it's not always easy to reproduce into a tangible item, such as a door hanger, flyer, brochure, guest pass, quick /fast e-mail.

B. As part of the new creative process, the committee will look to develop templates and resources that franchisees can use to take the national campaign and easily turn it into a local/guerilla campaign.

4. Significant Improvements Have Been Made to Interactive Tools, and the Lead Gen Program is Producing Record Results. We have successfully launched a new lead generation site, a new mobile site, and an Android version of our "Spotter App". In addition, leads are up 10% year over year.

5. Awareness of the Lead Gen Program and Education on How to Work the Leads Is Still

a Major Opportunity. The committee shared that many owners and GMs don't know how to track leads and/or don't realize the value the program generates. GGI will be working to create special system webinars (date TBD) and a best practices PowerPoint that can be downloaded on Gold's Connect.

6. We discussed the new Gold's Connect and provided feedback on its awareness and functionality. The committee agreed that more education is needed on how to use it and there is an opportunity for more in-depth content and a more dynamic interface.

7. We set another record in 2011 for PR hits, impressions and media value. During the call we reviewed the many national PR successes happening right now including our national REDBOOK partnership, the new "Show Us Your Journey" promotion, The Gold's Gym Challenge and our Microsoft Xbox 360 partnership.

8. The Tour de Cure is right around the corner and we are developing a new promotional kit to help you recruit riders and raise money.

### GGAAC FRANCHISEE MEMBERS:

Gordon Johnson, Chair  
Rich Drengberg, Vice-Chair  
Stace Beecham  
Bryce Berry  
Kim Kenyon  
Stephen Langdon  
Todd Levine  
Tom Muller  
Chris Palmer



# AN INTERVIEW WITH SHAUN SMITH, OWNER, GOLD'S GYMS AIKEN SC, NORTH AUGUSTA SC & AUGUSTA, GA

**GGFA:** Shaun, it's a pleasure to speak with you today. We are excited to hear about your success and strategies for your gyms in Aiken, North Augusta and Augusta. Thank you for sharing your insight with the GGFA.

**SHAUN:** Thank you. I love the GGFA. The value of the GGFA is tremendous. I often tell people, it is the best \$40 a Gold's Gym owner can spend. The GGFA is what keeps Gold's quality franchisees together. I think the brand is going in a great direction now. I appreciate everything the GGFA has done from the valuable agreement negotiations to educating franchisees.

**GGFA:** We are here for you! Shaun, how did you get started in the fitness business?

**SHAUN:** In 1991, I was 21, in college and cleaning swimming pools full time. One day, I was eating lunch at the pool store and a customer, who was also a friend of the owner, came in and commented on my lunch. I always liked to stay in shape and work out, so I was eating tuna out of a can.

The customer, Clif Hall, started asking for

exercise advice from me. He had a Soloflex and asked me if I thought that would do the job. I invited him to come with me to the gym. Clif became my workout partner and years later, my business partner.

After college, I went into the insurance business. Clif traveled a lot for his job, and he would always come home and tell me how nice Gold's Gyms were. One day, he said, "Aiken could really use a Gold's Gym. How much do you think it would cost?" I laughed and said, "Probably a million."

**GGFA:** Yes, we hear from many franchisees how money is always one of the main challenges in the beginning.

**SHAUN:** Yes, assembling the money can be a lesson in perseverance.

The Gold's seed was planted in our minds, so Clif called Gold's Gym International and asked about the price. He spoke to Paul Grymkowski, and he recommended a consultant to analyze our market. He suggested we put together a business plan in the meantime. We were excited.

In early 1995, Clif presented me with a



business plan, so I sold everything I had and borrowed as much as I could. We finally got an SBA loan and started construction and presale in 1997. The Aiken gym opened in January 1998.

From the time of the business plan and market analysis, it was three years before the gym actually opened. We bought a piece of property and the franchise agreement in 1996. The financing took longer than we expected to come together, but I think that's the way it usually goes.

**GGFA:** I'm sure the opening of the Aiken gym in January 1998 was a moment you will never forget. Tell me how the Aiken gym has changed over the past 14 years.

**SHAUN:** When we first opened, Aiken was an 18,000 sq. ft. stand-alone facility. In 2005, we began an expansion project because a 35,000 sq. ft. competitor moved in a quarter mile away.

**GGFA:** Oh wow.

**SHAUN:** Not to worry. In January 2006, the competitor handed us the keys to the business. Today, Aiken is almost 50,000 sq. ft.



**GGFA:** Tell us your secret for ousting that competitor.

**SHAUN:** To stand out from the competition, I think you have to do two things.

One, is keep all the fundamentals in check and operating above the members' expectations. When I say fundamentals, I mean strong sales systems, excellent customer service, well-maintained equipment, cleanliness, programming, PT -- the fundamentals of any gym.

Two, you can either have the biggest, nicest facility with the most amenities in the market, which is what we did in Aiken, or you can offer the lowest price. In other words, if you don't have all the bells and whistles, you have to offer the lowest price.

For example, in Augusta, we have a low price model gym. We noticed within a 3 mile radius, there were three gyms priced at \$35-\$45 per month. We felt we could really compete with those three gyms by offering a low price model in that market. It works beautifully, and now we also own one of the other three in the radius.

**GGFA:** So what you are saying is you have to be willing to change up your strategy in order to compete.

**SHAUN:** Exactly. In Aiken we have acquired a total of 4 competitors that we either operated for a short term after the acquisition, or we closed it down immediately and merged the members. We've done the same thing once in North Augusta and once in Augusta. Plus there are been several other competitors come and go while we stand strong.

The bottom line is you have to make sure you are doing something different than your

competitors. Be creative with your pricing. We are always thinking about what we are going to do when the next competitor comes. We assume it is the worst case scenario. With this strategy, we have seen our volume increase significantly. As operators, we need not be scared to make radical adjustments to be competitive and differentiate ourselves.

**GGFA:** Very interesting, Shaun. Tell me what other strategies you have for success.

**SHAUN:** Marketing and advertising is a major strategy for us. Our four clubs are all within a 22 mile radius, so we're in one advertising market. We send a minimum of 60,000 pieces of direct mail every month. We use billboards. We are on six radio channels twelve months a year. We have our own TV show we produce about four times a year called "Fit to be Gold," which is like ABC's Biggest Loser. We use shared mail like Red Plum and are on the front cover monthly. I am a huge believer in marketing and advertising. I would be willing to bet there is no other operator who spends more money per club in marketing than we do! We are always trying new ideas and fine-tuning our promotions.

I am very lucky to have a sharp marketing guy, Allen Childs, on my team. He executed a direct mail card a couple years ago, and the day after he mailed it out, he had four phone lines installed and paid four people to answer the phones. I thought he was crazy, but then I saw all four phones ring constantly for two weeks. It really opened my eyes to marketing.

Personal Training is also a big part of our gyms. We used to outsource it, but we started doing it ourselves. PT is a whole separate business in itself, and it needs to be treated as



such. If owners don't see significant profitability with PT, they are missing a huge opportunity. In fact, we are willing to assist or partner with other Gold's Gym owners who would like help.

**GGFA:** Very good information, Shaun. What are your plans for the future?

**SHAUN:** We are definitely wanting to grow. Right now we are looking in three or four new markets.

**GGFA:** What is your advice for other owners who are wanting to grow in the near future?

**SHAUN:** For franchisees looking to grow, there are a ton of acquisitions available out there at great prices. It's a lot like the current housing market. I would advise franchisees to start looking around for possible acquisitions.

**GGFA:** Shaun, thank you for your willingness to share with other franchisees. I know they will appreciate your insight and advice. We wish you the best of continued success in Aiken, North Augusta and Augusta and in your future markets. You help make Gold's Gym great.



# 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

WHAT ARE TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW TO STAND OUT FROM THE COMPETITION?  
WE ASKED THE EXPERTS!

**SAL PELLIGRINO**

**DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, STARTRACK**

“In my current position as director of national accounts, I have the distinct pleasure of seeing a wide range of facilities in my travels. From large national chains to the new functional group training clubs, everyone is looking for that competitive advantage. The one consistent theme I hear is ‘How can I beat my ever-growing competition base or differentiate myself in my marketplace?’”

Here are a few suggestions:

**1** Have your sales or membership team members go back and review why the last ten members joined the gym. Ask them why they made the commitment. Also, call the last ten members who drifted away and see why they (or the gym) failed in their quest to achieve fitness. The information you receive will be telling. The reasons for joining is often not just weight loss. There are a lot of emotional drivers in play, so try this during your next team meeting and share the results with the owner and key team members.

**2** Have you moved to a dual income revenue stream via EFT for group training? In the last year this trend has picked up a ton of momentum. I have seen growing success from the addition of Go Performance Fitness, to club owners working with Thomas Plummer and the NFBA seminars to watching a number of new boutique group training centers achieving amazing results in the marketplace. Members working in groups will pay longer and stay longer as long as they see the value. So this may be that little retention advantage you may be looking for!

Don't be afraid to jazz up your center by adding that 2,000 square foot club within a club group training concept. This is a strategic advantage that the low cost operators cannot match. Get those new members working in groups and moving so they achieve weight loss results in those first thirty days. They will stay with you and brag to all their friends in your community. Yes, we are still a word of mouth industry – it's very powerful!

**3** I try to view a number of club websites as I tour the country and a few areas of improvement come to mind:

**a.** Is your website mobile device friendly? Mobile searching is huge right now. Today more and more consumers are searching for information using their smart phones.

**b.** For prospecting, more member engagement and guidance / motivation. Don't forget to share those amazing success stories of current members – they are priceless!

**CASSIE PIERCEY**

**MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER FOR TOTAL GYM**

## 4 Things You Can Do Right Now to Stand Out on Facebook

For businesses to thrive on Facebook, they must focus on engagement. In order to engage, they must build a compelling presence so their target audiences can find them, Like their page and hang out for a while in order to optimize their Facebook marketing. Here are four ways your business can stand out on Facebook:

**4** Claim your Facebook page URL. Creating a simple URL for your Facebook Fan page looks cleaner than a string of code, it's easier for people to find you and it can improve your search rankings. Go to <http://www.facebook.com/username> and follow the easy steps to create your custom Facebook page URL.

**5** Create a branded profile picture. Make your Fan page look sharp with a branded profile picture. Utilize the space Facebook provides for the profile picture (at least 180 pixels wide and under 4MB) and customize an image with your logo. For example: [www.facebook.com/TotalGym](http://www.facebook.com/TotalGym). Consider also including your contact information, website address, phone number, etc.

**6** Great content begets more Fans. The key to standing out on Facebook is to create “shareable” content. The new Facebook rewards the level of engagement between you and your Fans. Post funny, conversation-starting status updates, pictures or videos, in addition to club news and promotions, to increase page visits. The more Likes, Comments or Shares, the better chance you'll be ranked as a Top Story.

**7** Identify Super Fans and give them a “virtual high five”. Keep an eye out for Super Fans – people who love your business, have purchased a membership and regularly interact with your Fan page. Then give them a virtual high five! For example, recognize them as the “Fan of the Month” or offer them a free guest pass. People like to see their name mentioned on a business page and may encourage others to become Fans.

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*

### 3 Best Practices that Make Gyms Stand Out

**8** Offer a Place to Belong. Offering social groups at your club is one of the easiest and most cost effective ways to improve retention and separate you from most other gyms around. It can also lead to additional new member sales. Odds are that many of your members enjoy similar activities, running, biking, reading, bible study, the list goes on. Think of ways to organize these types of social groups in your facility. Groups should be free to all and lead by someone on your staff to start. Once it becomes a regular happening turn over the reins to a member.

This is a great way to get your members involved in activity at your facility that is not completely centered on fitness. Organize a weekly run or a book of the month club and keep your members abreast of these happenings via signage, newsletters and emails. If executed well, your club will become more than just a gym. It is much harder to walk away from your social life than it is a gym membership by getting members involved and emotionally tied to your club they will stick around and pay you longer.

**9** Perform Random Acts of Kindness. How are you different? Well a treadmill is a treadmill. But people can make a difference. Every employee, trainer and owner should perform 3 random acts of kindness every day for your members and clients. While it is easy to get carried away in daily grind and focus on “strictly business” something as simple as leading a member to their car with an umbrella on a rainy day, giving the spin class a free water or taking time to talk to a member about their hobbies can infuse some good vibes into your routine. Just make sure to hold your staff accountable and pretty soon they will naturally look for ways to do it on their own.

**10** Offer the Reward for Results. What is the number one reason most members are at your club? It's a Trick Question. There are as many reasons as there are people but, for most fitness is a big factor. I still believe people stay part of our membership as long as they see results and accomplish their goals. So this should be one of the primary areas of focus in regards to your communication with members.

Whether it comes in the form of the newsletter, through congratulations notes to keep them motivated, by recognition of achievement and consistently reminding people that nothing will happen without the effort. You should always make sure your members know you are there to help and committed to showing them how to get the results if they ask.

Remember, it is your job to make it as easy as possible and have multiple options for them to realize the true potential of your club and themselves. In this way our members don't feel as though we sold the membership and forgot who they are and why they are there which unfortunately happens all too often at many facilities.



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## “WHAT WAS THE SINGLE BEST FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN OR STRATEGY FOR YOUR GYM IN 2011?”

*GGFA MEMBERS WERE ASKED THIS QUESTION VIA SURVEY. HERE ARE THE RESPONSES.*

- Daily status updates, using instructors to tag and update our page.
- Posting success stories.
- Using Facebook to promote our 2011 Breast Cancer Zumbathon Event we held at all our gyms in October. We leveraged Facebook to promote the event from beginning to end by first creating an invite for all our members. We featured our promotional artwork online; we posted images of the t-shirts being donated; and we even had a countdown a week prior to the event to drive anticipation and attendance. Overall, we had over 600 people attend the event across all our gyms and we raised over \$8,000 for the American Cancer Society! We also ran a special 1-day sales promotion on Facebook the day of the event where we sold a total of 55 new memberships in 1 day alone! At the end of the event, we drove activity on our page by posting videos and pictures of the Zumbathon



Event and tagged all our members who supported the event. Overall, a huge success and members are already asking us when the next Zumbathon will be at our gym!

- Promoting a \$10.00 per month low cost offer.
- We did a campaign where people had their friends go to our page, “like” us and write “<insert friend’s name> rocks and so does Gold’s Gym!” Whoever had the most won \$100 from the club. We picked up several hundred fans that way who converse with us regularly.
- Posting fitness and wellness articles daily. We post something new every day.
- Posting a virtual tour of our facility on our web site. Navigating prospects to the web site on all our advertising and marketing campaigns. It has increased 7 day pass traffic.





# MODIFY TO MAXIMIZE

BY SARA KKOPEMAN, MEMBER OF THE GGFA “THINK TANK”



Programming serves both your members and your bottom line—but in order to effectively maximize your programming potential, clubs need to consider both the ability level and limitations of each and every member of their clientele. Clients with special needs and health concerns are common in every facility, but programs at health clubs across the globe generally target the average healthy adult. In order to attract and attend to the needs of every ability level, learn to

modify your marketing, identifying common risks for special clients and how they can be addressed.

Certain programs are able to target multiple needs with one specific discipline—weight loss classes can appeal to a variety of clients, sports-specific training may work for young athletes and prenatal courses can often assist post-rehab clientele. In any case, the first step to identifying how to adjust a class to suit a special need is identifying how the special

population may deviate from an average client. Find what purpose a class serves, and try broadening the program to attract members who may not consider group exercise

Similarly, use your whole arsenal of fitness professionals to your advantage. From personal trainers to cycling instructors, there is bound to be an employee who can identify with the challenges of these unique clients.

For many athletes, training can be exclusive to improving performance—but for many special populations, everyday training is crucial to increasing function and safety in everyday situations.

Revising your programming to include special populations can be a simple fix. Ensure instructors illustrate modifications and alternatives for others in the room. Those craving a high-intensity workout can carry on with the instruction to best suit them, while other clients will revel at programming that feels tailor-made and inclusive to their fitness limitations.

Target personal trainers to work with group exercise professionals to reshape the way classes target the average client. If a club has the luxury of physical therapists or rehab specialists, learn to incorporate these techniques into low-impact group exercise programming. These strategies can open doors to a new range of clientele desperate for direction on how to best address their special needs.

Once a new demographic is targeted by new programming, monitor the results. These results become crucial to benefiting your bottom line. Use testimonials, and identify top instructors to strengthen programming. Success stories can be highlighted in advertising campaigns—from local newspapers and radio shows to internal club newsletters, the success of special programming can bolster

class attendance, increase personal training revenue and open doors for new members.

Above all, try to reach out to new clientele with unique limitations and engage in their accounts of accomplishment. A member's success will only provide a renewed incentive for staff and help pave a pathway for new members.

Sara is a favorite Club Industry, Athletic Business Conference and IHRSA presenter, as well as the Illinois State Business Woman of the Year. As CEO of SCW Fitness Education and Les Mills Midwest, Sara is also a licensed attorney, a Fitness Editor for Oxygen Magazine, a former adjunct faculty member for the Cooper Institute for Aerobic Research, ACSM and NASM.





# 5 WAYS TO MAKE YOUR FOOD SERVICES THE MOST PROFITABLE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



## 1. OFFER HEALTHY FOOD PRODUCTS:

Whether you have a Café, Juice Bar or Retail Shop in your club, the best thing you can do is make sure that you are supplying members with the healthiest products on the market. More and more Americans are beginning to seek healthier food choices and they are becoming aware of the dangers of processed foods.

## 2. RECOVERY SHAKES:

The Recovery Shake may be the single most important meal that your members consume in a day, especially as it relates to their workout goals. By offering only healthy recovery options, you are giving your members something that is truly good for their bodies and you are increasing their chances of reaching their performance goals.

## 3. SUPPLEMENTS:

Once you have settled on the perfect smoothie product, take it one step further with supplements. People love to be able to walk up to a Juice Bar or Café and order a shake that is specifically designed to meet their needs. By offering a broad spectrum of supplements, your club makes it easy for customers to find the right shake for their needs. Not

only do supplements increase your product offering and allow you to reach out to more customers, but they also increase your profits!

## 4. EDUCATION:

Many club owners think that if they can provide a great product, people will come flocking. That is not always the case. People need to be educated. Don't stop at simply stocking the shelves and creating a menu board, now you need to educate your members on the timing of when each product should be consumed. Your space should turn into a place where your members can depend on accessing not only healthy food products but dependable information too.

## 5. SELECT THE RIGHT PROVIDER:

There are many companies out there that can facilitate the process of delivering great food products to your members. Be careful though when selecting the right company for your health club. They need to provide products with great nutritional profiles as well as merchandising, POP and the ongoing nutritional information that is going to support the products and educate your members.



## PAYING ATTENTION TO MR. JONES

It's a typical Monday morning, and Mr. Jones just joined your club over the weekend. He walks into the club at 6:00 AM looking to workout. He is eager to start his week, his new life! As he approaches the front desk, he swipes his card, puts on his headphones and begins his makeshift workout routine. Before leaving the house, he kissed his wife, the kids and the dog good morning, started to answer emails on his blackberry, drank his \$5.00 coffee and drove to the club.

An hour later, he leaves the club and heads to work to start his day... his week... his new healthier life!

It sounds like a typical morning, with a typical new member in a health club right? So, let's look at this from a different perspective. Did we ever stop and think about Mr. Jones? What is his experience during his short hour with us? Did we make his workout experience really unforgettable? Did the front desk say hello? Did we offer him any of our assistance? Did he meet with a trainer? Did he buy a recovery shake at our juice bar? Did we say goodbye and have a great day? Or, did we just assume that he will come back tomorrow for another workout?

As owners, we know if we don't offer any assistance during his first six weeks of membership, there is a real good chance that Mr. Jones will drop out and cancel! Yet, as professionals, we continue to just assume that our club is different! "He will never leave!"

The industry states that the average club will have 60% of their members drop out or stop coming to the club during the first six weeks. Why? Let's think about it... It hurts to work out! It takes time, energy and patience to see results, and most people only train at most one hour a day! If you're a club looking to get that member the best return on their investment, then let's talk about how to service that member the other 23 hours of the day. Think about it. What are the most important needs in Mr. Jones's life? Maybe it's faith or his family, or his career, and yeah, the gym, to lose that weight the doctor told him he needed to. We practice faith all day. We live for our families all day. We work and think about our careers most of the day, but we come to the gym at best, one hour a day!

Ironically, members believe that their results should come from that one hour in your club. So, how do the most successful clubs



across the nation solve this? Do they just hope to sign up more members than they have cancellations? NO! They solve this by servicing that customer 24 hours a day, not just the one hour they're in the facility! This creates a winning situation for the club and a caring culture at the facility with the members for many years to come! They see results, their family and friends see the results and your retention and business grows. I always ask trainers, how many hours a day do you train your client? Hopefully, they respond as the great ones do, with 24 hours a day!

So, how do you go from being good to being great? Think about integrating your valuable services as part of your offerings. Is it super-sizing or just fact-finding? Begin at POS and then offer these services during the new member orientations as well as with retail on the gym floor. If you don't ask, we don't receive.

Multiple times, I have heard a worried owner say that their primary focus is "getting that member in the door to sign up now!" Or, "I don't want to offer too many solutions at Point-of-Sale (POS)." Or, "It will confuse the customer with all of these choices." And finally, my favorite, "the customer only has X amount to spend. I want to make sure I get the money!" This tells me that there isn't an effective sales process in place and that the club is dependent on the limited skills of the advisor. There really isn't any real mission or desire to service that member. As owners, we must always manage the positive and offer that complete solution all day long, every day, to every member!

Let's start with two of the most popular offerings, Personal Training (PT) and Nutrition. It's been referenced by a major club chain that if a member gets involved with PT, let's say at POS, they will stay in your club two times longer! If that same member gets involved with

an individualized nutrition program and PT, they will stay in your club four times longer. Why you ask? Attention and Professional Assistance = Results!

As a club owner, if we don't do this, are we really providing a complete fitness solution to that member? Or, are we setting up that member to fail while creating a losing situation for health clubs across the nation? That member comes in for results, and we offer weights, cardio and maybe group exercise? The member has no real direction and is probably intimidated to step into class. Remember, it hurts to work out, results take time and members have daily responsibilities, career objectives, family and their faith that needs attention. Who has time to work out and maybe get results?

If all of us in the industry just gave a little more attention to each member, while providing a results-based solution and make it part of our club's DNA, culture and sales process, Mr. Jones will achieve the results he truly signed up for.

We are now enhancing Mr. Jones's fitness experience, while significantly building our brand. Hey, we just might create fans for life!



*Tony is the National Sales Director for Visual Fitness Planner. Before joining VFP, Torre was the National Sales Manager for dotFIT worldwide, developing new business and servicing hundreds of accounts across the nation. Prior to heading to dotFIT, Torre was the North East Regional Manager for 24 Hour Fitness/Apex Fitness. Torre's career in fitness started when he was a teenager as a sales consultant for a Multiple Gold's Gym chain in the NYC metro area. He matured with that corporation, evolving into a Regional for the facilities, and eventually, a hands-on owner and operator.*



## WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL TRAINING AND WHEN SHOULD TRAINERS IMPLEMENT IT?

Recently I read an article in a fitness trade magazine regarding Functional Training. The writer called it a "New Trend." As I read the article, I realized the type of training she was describing has been around since Spartacus. It was just new to the author.

As an industry we need to market to the public for a couple of reasons. First, we need customers or we won't remain in business. Successful marketing should create interest in our products or services which will hopefully result in a purchase. Secondly, we want to help the public engage in a healthy lifestyle because in the end, all parts affect the whole. If we can

help others stay healthy, we ultimately help ourselves.

We know marketing works. Is Functional Training a marketing term or is it really a type of training? For example, can we define aerobics? Jogging? Yoga? Mind body exercise? Plyometrics? I think we can. However, it is very difficult to settle on a definition of Functional Training. In general, this type of training is said to be more "real life." Body weight, stability balls, medicine balls, kettle bells, ropes, monkey bars, TRX and other assorted "toys" are spoken of as Functional Training. These modalities are



often described as reaching beyond the scope of basic exercises. This leads me to believe functional training exercises are superior when it comes to function. However, these claims seem to contradict themselves. For example, a foundation of anything usually consists of the basics. However, anything above the foundation is superior or “above.” In mechanics, a foundation or basic design always dictates its function. I mean, we could use a guitar as a hammer, but it won’t last very long. (That was a joke.) Plus, shouldn’t a person learn the basics before they progress to a more complicated set of exercises?

We function every day. We squat, lunge, curl things towards our bodies, curl out of bed, place stuff over our heads, pick things up off the floor and push and pull with both arms, or one at a time. Sounds like squats, lunges, curls, sit ups, over head press, dead lift, row and presses to me. These motions are often described as “primal movement patterns.” I rarely see people in their normal

day with one or two feet wrapped in a cord performing an exercise, standing on a dome-shaped ball lifting a weight, climbing on monkey bars, jumping on a trampoline or swinging ropes. Again, if you practice guitar, you become proficient as a guitarist, not a drummer or for that matter, a better parent. Of course, your sense of time, intonation and overall musicianship may become enhanced and you may improve as a drummer. Maybe your hearing will become more acute and as a parent; you’ll listen more. (Another joke!) However, according to the S.A.I.D. Principle (Specific Adaptation to Imposed Demands), the adaptations are specific. Hold on..... I’m not for one instant stating these functional exercises won’t enhance function, but, as an industry speaking to each other--- should we define only those types of exercise as functional training? Are these exercises functional because they are not in a fixed plane? Walking is in a fixed plane -- predominately the sagittal plane. Does that

mean it’s not functional? Are functional exercises superior because they are unstable? Most chairs are fairly fixed, especially the first chair you sit in the morning. Does that mean it’s not functional? Are they better because they are multi-joint or compound exercises? So are squats, cleans and dead lifts. Are these basic exercises less functional than performing those same movements on a ball, a foam roller or strapped in a swing?

Almost every exercise can be argued to serve some type of function however, it’s up the trainer or exerciser to determine what piece of equipment or “tool” to use to enhance that function. I just read this study: <http://www.ptjournalonline.org/content/early/2008/02/21/ptj.20070045.abstract> entitled Patterns During- Sit-to-Stand Task One Year following Unilateral Total Knee Arthroplasty. The study concluded that the test subjects had weak quadriceps so they relied more on their hips to stand up. In essence, they weren’t functioning properly. As they exercised and rehabbed their knees, the quadriceps got stronger but the altered movement patterns remained.

Here was their conclusion:

The increased hip extensor moment demonstrated that subjects adopted a strategy to avoid the use of the quadriceps femoris muscle, yet this strategy persisted as the quadriceps femoris muscle strength improved. This pattern may be a learned movement pattern that may not resolve without retraining.

The same thing can happen increasing their strength or fitness in the gym. A person gets stronger, but unless specific retraining of the altered movement pattern is introduced, strengthening alone won’t solve poor mechanics. Poor mechanics result in poor function which eventually leads to

dysfunction. In essence, you have a stronger person functioning incorrectly. This is an important concept to always remember when exercising or performing any movements in general.

Many of the exercises or modalities called “functional training” are cool and a lot of fun. For most people, it’s a new way to train and may cause members to stop and watch. Equipment manufacturers who sell these functional training tools or equipment use the term functional and have science to back it up. The industry changes so fast that they responsibly recommend we attend yearly seminars and workshops. Marketers and the press can also increase the demand for these new tools and programming. Some trainers and coaches are quick to use these tools. They may however lack the knowledge of biomechanics or progression to incorporate these tools, or, in many cases, may have too many participants to properly supervise them performing these challenging exercises. I myself have witnessed clients, who in an effort to keep up, compensate with an altered pattern to complete the exercise using the new tool. The client is now reinforcing a poor altered pattern or actually, creating another compensatory pattern without even knowing it. Good trainers can spot this. In order to correct these patterns, a trainer must often use slow and controlled, isolated movement to reprogram their movement patterns. In fact, a leg curl, knee extension and a lateral raise are all single joint motions that are basic exercises and supposedly non-functional, however they are staple exercises commonly used to rehabilitate knees and shoulders to help people function properly in their daily activities.

I found a few definitions of the word functional:





- Functional - of or pertaining to a function or functions.
- Capable of serving the purpose for which it was designed.
- Constructed or made according to the principles of functionalism or primarily as a direct fulfillment of a material need.
- Designed for or adapted to a particular function or use.

#### What is Functional Training?

- Something you do in work, daily life or sport.
- Exercise that mimics work or daily life.
- Integrated movements are functional.
- If knee flexion is 90° or shoulder flexion is 120° you are “functional.” Orthopedic surgeons.
- Sport Specific Training versus Functional Exercise.

So what is it? Based on the definitions mentioned, I believe it is concept or mindset of applying exercise or force to our bodies. This concept can vary based on the goal.

As an industry, we need, and will keep evolving. Ironically, that can mean reviving older tools or techniques, in a fresh new way. Using “Functional Training” as a marketing term is effective for attracting new members and clients. If it succeeds in attracting new members or more personal training clients then the term has actually served its function! As a trainer however even vaguely defined, the concept of functional training is worthy of health and fitness professionals to incorporate it as a programming term. The fitness industry is so plagued with myths and misinformation, we must be careful to not mix the two, at least when we’re communicating with each other.

I’m my opinion the fitness industry has never been better, or more informed. Exercise in general has the ability to increase function.

Professionally, or as a trade, we should recognize that these new (and not so new)

tools and toys of Functional Training are just tools in the toolbox and if we’re going to use them, we should know what to look for and how to progress. Have your trainers attend workshops or host workshops at your facility. Education is key, especially, with the modern day’s level of fitness and the increasingly sedentary lifestyle that technology is leading us towards.

As an industry, we can help improve our members and ourselves; we must be careful though.... We don’t want to market without substance. We are a service industry first and a sales industry second. When it comes to discussing exercise programming as a profession, I hope we’re trainers that can sell, not salespeople who can train. We have to do both well; let’s just watch the grey area so it doesn’t get too blurry.

Most people need to begin exercising with the basics and progress properly from there. In exercise, everything is “load” or force dependent. If your client is just picking a pencil off the floor, form isn’t as imperative, unless of course they’re picking it up 1000 times. As the load increases, form becomes more critical. Trainers should start their clients with stable, simple basic exercises first. Once the client has become proficient in these exercises, then gradually introduce different modalities. Here is a simple example of progression using a basic exercise:

- Start with a dumbbell press for example, regardless of whether your client is lifting dumbbells, kettle bells, a medicine ball with handle or a bucket of paint; lift with both hands with legs at shoulder-width wide stance.
- Progress to a staggered stance (one foot in front of the other, like a lunge stance) and press with both arms.
- Return to the original shoulder-width stance

and progress to a single-handed or unilateral lift. Keep the dumbbells in both hands but only lift with one arm at a time.

- Return back to both weights in both hands and stagger your stance and alternate upper extremities lifting with one arm at a time.
- Repeat the exercise above but drop one of the weights so you’re only loaded on one side. Do a set with each arm.
- Return back to the wide stance and lift one leg off the ground. Begin by pressing with both arms.
- Now progress to lifting with one arm over the supported side; right foot is off the ground and right arm is pressing. However, you still have weights in both hands.
- Still loaded on both sides, progress to the opposite arm over the unsupported leg.
- Now, drop one of the dumbbells and repeat the same progression as above. Right arm over the right stance leg, then left arm over the right stance leg.
- Begin the entire sequence from the top with the non-dominant eye closed.
- Repeat the entire sequence with the dominant eye closed.
- Once your client can perform this entire progression, you can now add an unstable platform or surface, such as a BOSU ball, balance board, etc.

In general, functional training tools and exercises are fun, challenging and can definitely increase fitness, skill and function. They have their place for sure. Basic exercises are also functional and for most people, the basic primal movement patterns of squatting, lunging, bending, twisting, pushing, pulling and walking are the best place to start. If we attract new clients with the likes of balls, kettle bells, ropes, etc., let’s be responsible enough

to incorporate them gingerly until the clients master the basics. If not, you might end up in lawsuit, increase your liability insurance premiums and eventually jeopardize our credibility for fitness industry as a whole.



*John Platero is a fitness educator who has consulted both nationally and internationally, most recently for the Royal family of Qatar. He is the Director*

*of Education for the National Council for Certified Personal Trainers and the author of “Yes You Can – Fitness After 40 – A New Beginning.” As an athlete John is a 2-time National Champion and has won 21 gold medals in cycling You may contact him at [johnplatero.com](http://johnplatero.com) or at [NCCPT.com](http://NCCPT.com)*







## MEET ALLISON WHITTAKER, MAJOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, GANNETT DIRECT MAIL SOLUTION

*How long have you been with your company?*

4 years.

*Tell us about your professional background.*

Since 1992 I worked in the healthcare and fitness categories partnering with fitness, weight loss, health systems, universities, high schools and corporations. I worked as a specialist in body composition scales, resting metabolic rate devices and osteoporosis testing. In the past 4 years I have been dedicated to being a specialist in direct mail and shared mail advertising.

I work with a variety of industries including fitness, healthcare, technology, membership-based organizations and restaur-

ants. Companies like Gold's Gym, Dell, Medi Weight Loss, AAA and others have come to rely on me to recommend and support their direct mail campaigns.

*What do you enjoy most about your work?*

Building relationships that last a lifetime. I believe that we are all connected. I believe that I am blessed to serve my customers, my family and my community. My passion is also to live yoga and pay it forward as a teacher—I am always excited about making a difference and sharing my knowledge—to support others in achieving their dreams and goals.

*Tell us about your family.*

Andrew is 18, my youngest and one of my heroes. He is a passionate soccer player

and had a challenging injury this fall that ended his soccer career. He sat the bench every game and every practice – his team won the PA State Championship. He suited up and showed up in spite of his heart breaking injury. He is enrolling in Messiah College in the fall to do his undergraduate work for Dr. of Physical Therapy.

Justin is my oldest son and can fix just about anything with his hands. He is a brilliant auto mechanic and builds cars from the ground floor up “for fun”. Ryan is 23 and he is a chess player extraordinaire. A thinker, he is entrepreneurial, and is involved in a new venture I am not clear on.

*What are your hobbies?*

Yoga, attending my son's school events, studying Anatomy of late (1 year long teacher training course) and supporting women who are recovering from the disease of alcohol addiction.

*If you could leave today for a month-long vacation, where would you go?*

I would go to England where the majority

of my nephews, cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts and uncles live. I am a first generation American.

While visiting my family, I would investigate and track down the homeopathic remedies of Dr. Charlie Abbott who resided in Leicestershire, England. He died and his family did not carry on his work, so I would develop a plan to bring these remedies to the market worldwide.

*What one word would you use to describe yourself?*

Passionate.

*What was the best concert you have ever been to?*

Paul McCartney and Wings. We stood on our 6th row chairs and danced and sang through the entire concert.

# GANNETT

GannettDirectMailSolutions

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# One Last Thing...

## HAVE YOU CHECKED OUT THE MANY PROGRAMS & RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU THROUGH THE GGFA?



### DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION FOR YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS?

Ask The System is a vehicle for you to ask your fellow franchisees questions pertaining to your business. The process is executed to protect the confidential nature of these questions so that only franchisees who contributed to the question are sent the compiled responses. All Franchisees can access archived questions and answers in this section

of the GGFA website at any time with your log-in. If you have an "Ask the System" question, please feel free to email GGFA Executive Director, Ginger Collins at [m3gigi@gmail.com](mailto:m3gigi@gmail.com) with a request to distribute it.

**We encourage you to submit questions and participate!**

### RECENT ARCHIVES:

Gift Cards at Point of Sale: 1-24-12

Marketing Pricing for Memberships: 1-17-12

Low Cost Membership: 11-29-11

PT Charges: 10-24-11

Outsourced HR Services: 9-19-11

Pre-Paid Credit Cards & Debit Card Declines: 8-30-11

Payroll Services: 8-23-11

Creative Ways to Add Value to Membership: 5-17-11



As a Gold's Gym Franchisee, you are part of the brand that leads the industry. The GGFA is committed to providing you with the tools and knowledge that will help you to build and sustain your business.

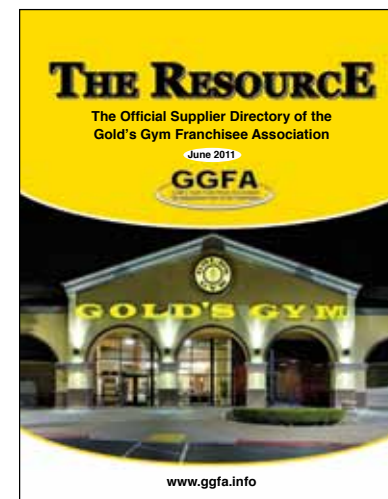
The overall program combines the knowledge of experts in key areas of club success, and information sharing by your fellow franchisees who have created best practices with a proven successful track record. [Click Here](#) to view upcoming webinars.



### MISSED A WEBINAR?

Members can view past webinars on the private GGFA YouTube channel by logging into the GGFA website and clicking on Franchisees>The Library & YouTube. Popular past webinars such as Facebook Fan Pages,

Turning Your Cost Centers into Profit Centers, Turn Medallia Into Continuous Improvements and more can be viewed from here.



## THE RESOURCE

The ResourceE is a complete index of products and services for your business, made up of suppliers in the GGFA's Supplier Partnership Network. The ResourceE should be the first place you look when intending to make purchases for your gym.

CLICK ON THE COVER IMAGE TO VIEW.



**VISIT THE VIRTUAL TRADESHOW (VTS) TODAY! [CLICK HERE](#) TO VIEW THE BOOTHS, ALL WITH SPECIAL OFFERS FOR GGFA MEMBERS!**



Visit The Locker Room, the Official Blog of the GGFA for quick-reads on the latest topics and trends! Every Friday, the GGFA posts a new blog entry written by guest bloggers from across the industry. All former posts are archived in The Locker Room by category for easy retrieval.

### Recent posts include:

"Successful Budgeting" by Rick Caro

"Sharing Joyful Tears" by Ginger Collins

"Social Media Platforms Offering New Types of Paid Advertisement Opportunities" by Bryan O'Rourke

Don't forget to add The Locker Room RSS Feed to your email so you receive posts as they are published. [Click Here](#) to visit The Locker Room.



# DataTrak

## HOW DO CLUB OWNERS DESCRIBE YOUR SOFTWARE?



ABC Financial is the industry leader in software development. For over 30 years, our clients have trusted us to deliver cutting-edge innovations that make their businesses better while offering their members a user-friendly portal for faster access to their accounts.

At **IHRSA 2012**, ABC proudly announced the roll-out of our new DataTrak release which includes tanning bed management, an employee portal allowing instructor/trainers the ability to manage their schedules from anywhere, and a new and improved version of MYICLUBonline. This new version provides club members enhanced account access, the option to buy and book personal training sessions, enroll in classes, and view their trainer biographies.

We invite you to learn more about what ABC can do to improve your business. Contact our sales team today at **1-800-551-9733** or visit us at **abcfinancial.com**.

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