

# Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

Jeff Russo's Pro Fitness Program Celebrates 20 Years of Vastly Increasing Personal Training Revenues!



Jennifer Poljacik Receives Pro Fitness Program's Club of the Year Award from Jeff Russo



OCTOBER 2017

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# Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

## The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

### Jeff Russo's Pro Fitness Program Celebrates 20 Years of Vastly Increasing Personal Training Revenues!

By: Norm Cates

First, I want to congratulate Jeff Russo on the **20th Anniversary of his Pro Fitness Program Company!** They have a lot to celebrate at their special business! So, congratulations to Jeff and his wife, Stacy, on the 20th Anniversary of the Pro Fitness Program!

In the **June 2012 Edition of CLUB INSIDER**, our Cover Story was about **The River Valley Club (RVC)** in *Lebanon New Hampshire*. **RVC Owner, Joe Asch**, shared information about Jeff Russo and his Pro Fitness Program, an operation that truly ignited Personal Training Sales at the RVC with the leadership of **Jennifer Poljacik, RVC Chief Operating Officer and Director of Personal Training**, leading the way. The club went from \$69,000 a year in 1-to-1 Personal Training Sales in 1999 to their current \$2.2 million a year as a result

of ongoing consulting support and training.

Within that story, I wrote the following comment about the very significant impact Jeff Russo's company had on PT at the RVC: "In addition to Joe Asch and Jennifer Poljacik (COO), Jeff Russo is a professional club consultant who specializes in personal training sales and service delivery with his Pro Fitness Program. He has made a huge and positive impact on the RVC operation."

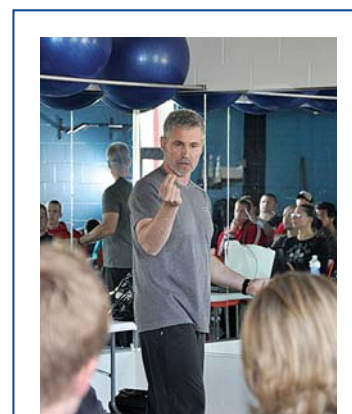
We're pleased to provide the following **CLUB INSIDER Cover Story** with Jeff Russo, and it will include the history and evolution of the Pro Fitness Program.

#### An In-Depth Interview With Jeff Russo, Pro Fitness Program Founder and Owner

**CLUB INSIDER (C.I.)** - Jeff, where were you born, and where did you grow up? Where

did you go to school, and what did you study? Did you play sports?

**Jeff Russo (JR)** - I was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and that's where I grew up... on the West end of the city. I went to Michael Power St. Joseph High School in Toronto. From there, I went to the University of Toronto, and I did a 4-year Honors degree in Political Science. Soon after I graduated from that program, I got accepted into law school in our nation's capitol at the University of Ottawa. But, in between the University of Toronto and law school at the University of Ottawa, I did a couple of entrepreneurial ventures and really got hooked on operating my own business after getting my first exposure being an entrepreneur. I started at the University of Ottawa for my law school program, but part way through my initial year, I decided to make a move and leave the program. From that point forward, I



Jeff Russo Presenting a PFP Workshop

got involved in the industry I was most passionate about from the time I was a youth, the health and fitness industry.

(See *Pro Fitness Program Page 10*)

## Lyle Schuler Passes Away at Home In Hurley, New York

**HURLEY, N.Y.** - Lyle Schuler passed away at home on Saturday, September 23rd in the presence of his wife, Holly Snow Schuler. The cause of death was not disclosed. Lyle Schuler was born in Bayshore, New York and resided in Hurley, New York.

Lyle Schuler was a Cortland State Exercise Science Graduate who always had a passion for health and fitness and helping others realize their goals.

With humble beginnings as an aerobics instructor, then personal trainer, he moved onto membership sales and General Management. He eventually achieved Partnership status in the Gold's Gym Hudson Valley group.

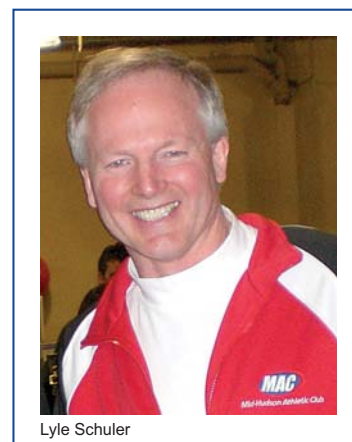
Lyle had over 35 years of health

club management, ownership and club consulting experience in a wide range of club sizes, from as small as 10,000 square feet to 120,000 square feet. As a Managing Partner for 14 years in five multi-sport clubs, Lyle's clubs were recognized for five consecutive years in Club Industry's "Top 100" for annual gross revenues.

After selling four of his clubs in 1998, Lyle joined the SalesMakers team with Eddie Tock and Ray Gordon, one of the leading sales and marketing consulting companies in the club industry for over 25 years. SalesMakers was recognized by the International Health, Racquet and Sports Association (IHRSA) in 2001 as the Associate Member of the Year for its outstanding contribution to

the health club industry. Consulting in 38 states nationwide, he specialized in club membership, management, personal training programs, club systems and cost-effective marketing. In addition, Lyle has presented at national and regional conferences with Club Industry, IHRSA, Gold's Gym, CCD, NERSA, Fitlife and NYSPPA.

In November of 2002, Lyle purchased a struggling Tiger Gold's Gym, a 40,000 square-foot health club in Kingston, New York. By the completion of his first year of operation, the club experienced a 70% increase in gross revenue and was on its way to a turn-around success. In September of 2005, (See *Lyle Schuler Page 6*)



Lyle Schuler

### Inside The Insider

- Simplify Your Marketing and Achieve Better Response in 2018 - **By:** Jon Butts
- The Fitness Industry's Game Changer - **By:** Daron Allen
- Eight Steps to Designing Your Niche Program - Part I - **By:** Casey Conrad
- What's in Your Product? - **By:** Derek Barton
- How to Maximize the Enforceability of Your Membership Agreement - **By:** Paul R. Bedard, Esquire
- How to Create Dynamic "Studio Clubs" Within Your Club - **By:** Bruce Carter
- Convert Your Weaknesses to Strengths! - **By:** Thomas Plummer
- Pro Fitness Program Announces Major Upgrades to its Fitness Assessment Software
- IHRSA Releases 2017 Health Club Consumer Report
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*



**...Norm's Notes**

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comments, so again, THANKS to all.

I have two things to say about all of their kind comments: 1. Those of you who've seen the movie JAWS, arguably one of the greatest movies in history, remember when the star of the movie, the local Chief of Police, MARTIN BRODY, masterfully played by ROY SCHEIDER, said to the boat captain after seeing the gigantic Great White man-eating Shark: "We're gonna need a bigger boat!" Well, after hearing Pamela's awesome comments, and

seeing the video presentations by that amazing group of nine speakers on video listed above, I told the crowd: "I'm gonna need a bigger HAT!!!" Yeah... I know... I had better not quit my day job to become a comedian! HAHA!

•JUSTIN and I want to express our sincere Thanks and Appreciation to all of the folks at Club Industry... PAMELA KUF AHL, MARTY McCALLEN, CRYSTAL ROMBERGER, ANTHONY DOMINIC and their entire Team, for producing a terrific 31st Annual Convention and Trade Show in Chicago, October 4 - 6, and especially for honoring

me with their Lifetime Achievement Award! Be sure to check out our Club Industry Photo Slideshow by going [www.clubinsideronline.com/clubindustry2017](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/clubindustry2017).

•Speaking of a "Bigger Hat," check out my new photo on **This Page**. A couple of months ago, I got an email from our friend, AUGIE NIETO, the amazing man who has survived LOU GEHRIG's DISEASE for 12 years, asking me to help him promote the 13th Annual BASH for Augie's Quest, which will be held on Friday Night, March 23, 2018 to wrap up the 2017 IHRSA Convention social schedule. Augie wrote, and I quote this portion of his email. "Our theme this year is 'Hacienda BASH,' and my team had a great idea since you have always been so supportive. Instead of doing an ad for the BASH (or in addition to), would you be willing to replace your signature black cowboy hat with a Sombrero in an upcoming issue to promote the Bash? Please say yes! We can send one to your home or office if you'd like. Thanks for your friendship and support, Augie." Of course, I wrote back to Augie that YES, I'd be happy to try to help in this manner. So, I want to point out my new "Hacienda BASH" photo on this Norm's Notes page, and I want to urge you all to make plans to be with us at the entire 37th Annual IHRSA Convention and Trade Show, and for sure, at the 13th Annual AUGIE'S QUEST Bash! Stay tuned, folks!

•If you're a vendor or manufacturer of products for our industry, this time of the year is an important time because IHRSA's Vice President of Exhibit Sales, TOM HUNT, is booking IHRSA's San Diego Trade Show space very rapidly! If you've never exhibited at the always fabulous IHRSA San Diego Convention and Trade Show, you've missed the premier event of



Señor Norm Cates

the year for our industry, and I would urge you to make plans to Exhibit your products there. Contact Tom ASAP at (800) 228-4772, Extension #152.

•Our Cover Story subject this month is JEFF RUSSO and his special company, Pro Fitness Programs. Jeff Russo and his Team have a wonderful thing going! I want to give you a heads up that, in this Cover Story, you may find the path to your future because Jeff and his terrific Team are producing super-human results in the Personal Training realm. To understand the magnitude of what Jeff's company is doing for club owners across the land, you need to see the chart tracking the results of Jeff's clients on Page #14. Before we proceed, I want to share the following comment from AL TASSEL, one of Jeff's top teammates in his company along with JEN POLJACIK and their Team. Here's what Al had to say about Jeff Russo:

*"When I heard about the financial numbers clubs were producing from the Pro Fitness Program, I decided to do some investigating. I had been around the block and was somewhat skeptical about (See Norm's Notes Page 7)*

**...Lyle Schuler**

continued from page 3

an additional 20,000 square feet of rental space was acquired, followed by the January 2006 purchase of the first Parisi Speed School license from Bill Parisi in the State of New York. By June of 2006, the building and real estate was also purchased while the Kingston Speed School led the new Parisi Speed School Licensees in monthly gross revenues nationwide several times throughout the year and had become a preferred reference for all new potential licensees. In 2008, the second MAC Fitness was opened in the Kingston Plaza and both clubs were recognized as Best Clubs in the Hudson Valley.

Lyle was known by all to be an amazing, caring and inspiring leader, who always put everyone else first. Lyle was also the best man at Eddie Tock's wedding, who remarked that Lyle was always the best man for everyone everyday in all parts

of their life! Lyle had the uncanny ability of making everyone around him feel like they were the most important person in the world. His passion and energy were contagious! He will always be remembered for his wonderful kindness, persistence, perseverance and wonderful energy that he brought to everything he was involved with. He put his heart and soul into all he did. He was loved by all and he will be greatly missed.

Son of the late Herb and Ann Schuler of Hurley, Lyle is survived by his wife Holly and son Colton, as well as his mother Audrey Wheatley of New Hampshire and brother Wayne, niece Heather, nephew Travis Schuler and grand-niece June Rose of Long Island, cousins Linda McGuire of Kingston and Nancy and Jake Hatten of New Jersey and many close high school and college friends who kept their friendship very close throughout the years in the most unique way.



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**...Norm's Notes**

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everything and everyone. When I called Jeff Russo, the owner of the company, I was immediately consumed with how passionate he was about truly helping club owners financially improve their businesses. Most business owners' primary focus is on making money, whereas I really got the impression that Jeff's main fulfillment came from helping others. After being a client of his for over five years, and now honored to be part of his team, I can undeniably attest to you that my initial impression of him was absolutely correct. He is honorable, genuine and affable, and he will go to great lengths to help his clients improve their operations. In an industry as competitive as ours, it's a pleasure to know there are individuals like Jeff Russo still out there."

Thanks Al. Folks, I want to urge each and every one of you who own and operate clubs that provide Personal Training to read and study Jeff Russo's amazing Cover Story, because by doing so, you may well be positioning yourself for a lifetime of increased income and profits in all of your clubs. Don't miss this amazing Cover Story about Jeff Russo, starting on Page #3. And, for sure... DON'T MISS the CHART on Page #14.

•What are FRIENDS for? This quick Note is to draw your attention to the Photo on This Page of RANDY IVEY and his brand-new BRIDE, JOYCE, back on October 4, 1968 on their Wedding Day 49 years ago. I'm publishing this for Randy and Joyce, because in Chicago, Randy told me he was attending the Club Industry Show because he wanted to be there to support me and watch me receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. And, he did so even though it was his 49th Wedding Anniversary! WOW! Randy then showed me this photo of him and Joyce 49 years

ago, and I want to congratulate them on: 1. Their 49th Wedding Anniversary, and 2. Their great son, Brandon! God bless y'all, Randy, Joyce and Brandon!

Randy was also at Club Industry working with MATT ZAGRODZKY at his iGO Figure trade show exhibit where they again conducted interviews with club owners, asking them only one question: "What makes your club great?" and for each of the people they interviewed, they donated \$20 to Augie's Quest. I can only say, "Good on y'all, Matt and Randy!" Keep up the great work for Augie's Quest! Randy wrote to me that they had over 50 interviews in Chicago, and he said this about Matt, his side kick for the show: "I was really impressed with Matt Zagrodzky. I know he must have taken acting lessons because he's really good and brought out the best in the participants... even the shyest ones. NBC should check him out!"

•Speaking of friends, my long-time friend industry friend, RAYBOB GORDON, who works at STEVE VUCOVICH'S Apple Athletic Club in Idaho Falls, Idaho is a member of the club's Seniors Tennis Team called the "Old Racketeers," which recently made it to the National



Randy and Joyce Ivey



The Old Racketeers - Top: Ray Gordon, Robert Boozer, Brad Vande Kamp and Charles Hunter Bottom: John Russell, John Stosich and Reuben Wilson (Captain)

Championship at the tournament in Denver (See the Photo on This Page)! Now, RayBob and his Team are heading to Orlando, Florida as their team has made it to the Final Four of the National Finals, scheduled for October 27, 28th and 29th. So... GOOD LUCK RayBob and Teammates! We're pulling for y'all to go ALL THE WAY! Stay Tuned folks! Oh... I want to add that this is what RayBob wrote to me about my Club Industry honor:

"Congratulations on your award in Chicago. It was very well deserved and earned. You really are the pulse of the

industry and have thrown your entire heart and soul into helping the industry." Thanks, Ray.

•Be sure to check out Visual Fitness Planner's new T-3 System by reading DARON ALLEN's Article about it on Page #22 and seeing their New Ad on Page #15.


•Thanks and Appreciation to JENNIFER URMSTON, one of our long-time CLUB INSIDER Advertisers for hosting her 2nd Annual Trade Show Happy Hour that was set up at her booth from 3PM to 5PM (See Norm's Notes Page 8)

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## ...Pro Fitness Program

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To answer the last part of this first question, yes, I did play sports. I played ice hockey in high school. But, my number one sport, and the one that I really focused on, was amateur wrestling. When I started in that, I was wrestling in the 182-pound weight class. Then, as I put on size and trained more, I started wrestling in the 195-pound weight class. And, then, I got really involved in weight training and body building. So, by my senior year in high school, I was benching 325 and had a squat of 450. I developed a lot of size and a lot of power, and obviously, I got hooked on weight training and body building and had a real passion for that. That really helped me decide to get a career going in the fitness industry, as well.

**C.I.** - Jeff, when and how did you become involved in the health and fitness club industry?

**JR** - Back in 1986, my last year in high school, I started in the fitness industry at a local fitness club called *Sherway Racquetball and Fitness* as a Personal Trainer. The full-time work started soon after I left the law school program at the University of Ottawa. I decided to follow my passion and get back involved in the fitness industry. I had continued to train all of those years, but the only job I found in the fitness industry was a membership sales rep position for a club up in Toronto. It was called *Premier Fitness*, and I took that sales role in 1995. I really enjoyed the business side of it, and I started to learn the sales side of the business. Before I knew it, I became a club manager. By 1997, I became a part owner by investment in a club called *Extreme Fitness* in Toronto. So, that's how I got involved. I probably worked every single position in the fitness industry. From doing fitness consultations to being a Fitness Director and Fitness Manager to Membership Sales and Club Manager. And, then, eventually to club ownership with *Extreme Fitness*.

**C.I.** - When and how did the Pro Fitness Program come to be?

**JR** - By 1998, I'd met my wife, Stacy, through the fitness industry. Working in the fitness industry with the long hours, lots of stress, dealing with members and all these different issues, we decided: **1.** We wanted a little bit of a different lifestyle. **2.** Always having that entrepreneurial spirit, as a part owner in the club, we wanted to do something on our own. So, in 1998, we decided to sell our shares in *Extreme Fitness*, and we asked ourselves, "What do we like to do?" We like to teach. We like to inspire. We like to motivate. WHAT do we like to teach? Well, we always loved this fitness business, so why don't we create a fitness business consulting company?

We started to look at our experience in the industry: Such poor retention rates, and members not getting

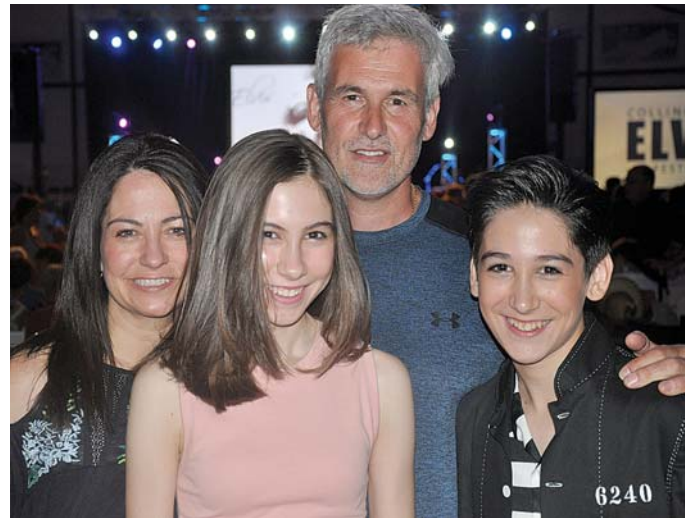
results in the areas of fitness. We saw what was going on, and we wanted to help the small, independent Ma and Pa club business owner who *CARES about their community, CARES about their members and WANTS to make a difference.* Our inspiration was to come alongside those individuals, teach them predictable business operating systems and help them be successful and be competitive. That's how the company started, and we built it from the ground up.

**C.I.** - What are the key facets of the Pro Fitness Program that differentiates it from other sales systems?

**JR** - First of all, we are one of the only consulting companies that focuses on 1-to-1 Personal Training Sales. Our program works in conjunction with any small group training program, but the majority of the revenue comes from personal training. Secondly, I think we have a very unique 90-minute fitness consultation and assessment that is extremely thorough where we do a lot of assessments... strength, cardiovascular, functional movement screens and so forth. We also assess people on the workout floor and how they move, exercise and use equipment. We also have a fitness-based approach where we take a look at obstacles and problems that challenge these individuals in terms of getting results. And, we prescribe the best possible solution in order to get them results. That's at the core, and that assessment was developed by Dr. James Manson, formerly of the Cleveland Clinic, and now, a Professor in Toronto. With all the normative data, where we compare it to average age, sex and so forth, the data that it prints out is very unique. The assessment was built for our company, so it's health-related normative data and health-related screening with the latest data out there to see if somebody is in a high-risk category for health related to all these assessments.

So, that's the starting point. We then sell based on solutions. We're solution providers. We sell based on knowledge. I think that really helps us to stand out, as opposed to many years ago, when I started in the industry, where we just taught them how to overcome objections and how to close hard. We definitely don't approach it in that manner. So, it's usually the client themselves who, through this long education and process, comes to the realization that this is the best possible solution for them and that they should be working with professionals in getting this help. So, it's an excellent prescriptive-based approach to selling. So, that's Part I, I would say.

Then, one of the things that differentiates us from anybody else is that we believe that this is the only way we



The Russo Family (L to R) - Stacy, Sydney, Jeff and Connor

can help people... **through education, results and knowledge, not just selling memberships.** So, everyone is required to do a membership when they join the club, and there's no options around that. But, there's also a paid assessment because we believe there is value in the assessment. We believe there is value in the education. And, we know when there is a paid assessment: **(1)** People take it a lot more seriously. **(2)** Show ratios are a lot higher. Additionally, we want to pay our Fitness Consultants/ Professionals for the service that they render. That differentiates us as well. Then, I would say that the way we approach our system and the way we implement our sales system, where there is a lot of hands-on, in-club training, is a differentiator.

Just to get this program off the ground, not only do we have a lengthy pre-launch period and pre-launch checklist that can last 4 to 6 weeks and is done online and by phone. Once they are ready to implement, our consultants go into the club for a full seven days of in-club consulting work with all of the departments in the club. Through that process, I think what is also very unique is that we've developed our own unique web-based software that speaks our business consulting language. I looked out there at a lot of software to see if we could find something to do what we needed it to do, but we need data around our fitness assessments and consultations. The other thing that's very unique is some clubs will only do one assessment. We don't. We believe that's only a starting point. There is no pass or fail; it's just a benchmark. What

good is doing one assessment unless you have something to compare it to? So, our system sends out automatic appointment email reminders. Our members come in four to six times a year to do re-assessments to see how they're progressing! I believe that's a great education tool, but it's also a great motivation tool. So, regardless of if they work with a trainer or not, our follow-up is very, very extensive.

Lastly, I would say that, in terms of our sales system, we have very unique pay systems, so we had to develop our own software because we have very unique pay structures that really help to motivate and encourage staff to follow the system. When I studied business consulting years ago, I read an article called **Catalytic Mechanisms of Catalytic Pay Structures.** Those are pay structures that are designed to get staff to perform and follow a system. If you create those kinds of systems, you almost don't have to manage them at that point because the pay structures manage themselves. So, for instance, Fitness Consultants will get residual income on all of the financed personal training. So, as those payments come in, they're commissioned on those. They get fees for assessments, and they are also commissioned on those. And, they can build up tremendous residual income. We have fitness consultants that, before the month starts, because they have sold so much personal training over the years, they have \$3,000 to \$4,000 in residual income before they sold their first new contract for that month. I think that's very unique. Also, our personal trainers get paid more the longer they retain a client. We call that a **graduated pay structure for trainers.**

There are many, many unique features, but *those are some of the key ones.*

**C.I.** - Please take us through the evolution of the Pro Fitness Program into the product it has become today.

**JR** - Early on, I was reading business consulting books and studying how to put  
 (See *Pro Fitness Program* Page 12)



## ...Pro Fitness Program

continued from page 10

a consulting company together. Talking about business plans and feasibility studies and getting all of that information. We were doing a lot of research, and of course, we had to develop systems and training manuals. On some of the earliest consulting projects, it was just my wife and me. I remember sitting in hotels for weeks at a time... training in the clubs, but at the same time, writing sales training manuals. It started to evolve from there. Shortly after that, I said one of the things that could really benefit us is some kind of management software solution so that, when I'm not in the clubs, I can see how the clubs are performing from a distance.

I help them co-manage the program, so we developed an early *Version I* of our management software that basically did some scheduling, but more importantly, had reports around sales and performance. We started working on some sales training DVDs and materials around assessing, consulting and sales. As these manuals developed, we started to produce posters for clubs and fitness consultation journals that members could complete and fill out for assessments. Then, it started to evolve even beyond that, so we developed an even more robust *Version II* of the software about five years ago, which we're currently using now. Since then, we started putting videos online within our own software. We started doing things like sending the consultation journal, and we started to automate that so it now goes out by automatic email responder where people can fill out all their health history questionnaires online. That comes in prior to the assessment so consultants can review it. Obviously, we've grown in terms of technology, but I think of it in terms of it not just being dependent on my wife and me. We've developed a great business consulting team of six business consultants working for our company, so we're not just dependant on one person. So, that's been the evolution of the program.

**C.I.** - Jeff, please take a moment and list those six team members you mentioned in your answer to the previous questions, and share your thoughts on them with us.

**JR** - They are: **Jennifer Poljacik, Al Tassel, Mary Beth Bradley, Anthony Janicas, Dr. James Manson,** and of course, my wife, **Stacy Russo** and myself. It's a Team that, if combined, has over 100 years of experience within the industry. Anybody who works for the company has to have been involved in some type of club management or club ownership. High level management... so they can understand all the different facets of operating a fitness club business. Just to give you an understanding of the diversity and experience of our team, starting with someone I've been working with who was actually interviewed for your **June 2012 Cover Story, Jennifer Poljacik.** Jenn, in

the last few years, has been named the *COO* of the **River Valley Club** and is one of our greatest success stories. When I originally met Jenn, she was in the trenches working a lot of different positions. She wasn't in management. To see her grow into a great manager and a great leader as our program grew and is now doing over \$2.5 million a year in Personal Training Sales is just great! Going on 4 1/2 years ago, she joined our team as a business consultant, and because of her years of experience in the trenches, working with the program and moving into that leadership position, she's been able to do a wonderful job with the Pro Fitness Program clients she's had, as well as growing the clientele... Clubs like **Cedardale Health and Fitness, Orchard Hills Athletic Club** and the **Longfellow Club.** She's kept her core base of clients and really poured into and invested in them, and they've been doing really well with that. She's been doing really, really well, and she's been able to balance that out between her career as COO of the River Valley Club and working for these other organizations. So, Jenn's the first person I want to mention.

**C.I.** - Please tell us about Al Tassel.

**JR** - Al's experience in our industry goes back into the 1980s as a club owner and an owner of Gold's Gyms. He has so much experience. He hired us to represent his *women's-only club* in *Wakefield, Massachusetts.* They had one location at the time. He'd been thinking about getting out of the business. Then, he heard about our Pro Fitness Program in a testimonial. Here's a guy who took this program and ran with it. He built his entire marketing program around it, and all of his programs were about it. Everything. The club was all about the Pro Fitness Program and the Fitness Consultation Assessment.

Well, to make a long story short, he had so much success in the Wakefield Club that they got up to \$600,000 - \$700,000 in PT revenues. Not only is he not thinking about selling his women's club location anymore, he says, 'I'm opening a second club in Woburn, Massachusetts because of the Pro Fitness Program.' He does that, and in a short period of time, he takes that club to a million dollars in Personal Training Sales! We're talking about a 12,000 square-foot club with not a lot of members! So, for him to sell that club and say, 'Jeff, I want to join your team full time and do this for the rest of my career...' That's the difference now in our program. We've got individuals like Al Tassel who's been in the trenches, who's used the program and has gotten tremendous success... there could be no better testimonial than somebody like that. And, when he goes into a facility with his



Sharon Tassel, Jeff Russo and Al Tassel at Pumps Fitness for Women in Wakefield, Massachusetts

wife, **Sharon**, who manages some of their clubs and also helps with the Pro Fitness Program, the buy-in is incredible, and the results that they are getting with their clients is incredible as well. Al's diversity and experience really helps our company! It totally rounds out our team!

**C.I.** - Please tell us about some of your other key people.

**JR** - For sure, I want to mention **Anthony Janicas**, who has a tremendous background in education with a Master's Degree. He was a Professor in the Kinesiology Department up in Hamilton, Ontario, and he has worked in so many positions in the club, including Club Management. He was the *Strength and Conditioning Coach* for the **OHL Erie Otters** and worked with **Edmonton Oiler's Connor McDavid.** He was one of our leading fitness consultants over the years in the Toronto market, so he's been in the trenches. When it comes to fitness assessing and teaching sales in that area, there is nobody better than him. We work as a team.

And, there's **Mary Beth Bradley**, who's based in Denver, Colorado. She has 31 years in the industry in terms of small and large club management. She has a Master's Degree in Recreational Facilities Management. Since 2006, she's been working with **Susan K. Bailey Marketing and Design** (See Ad on Page #25), but she's also a Personal Trainer and is doing phenomenally well in terms of bringing in new clients and working with them.



Anthony Janicas

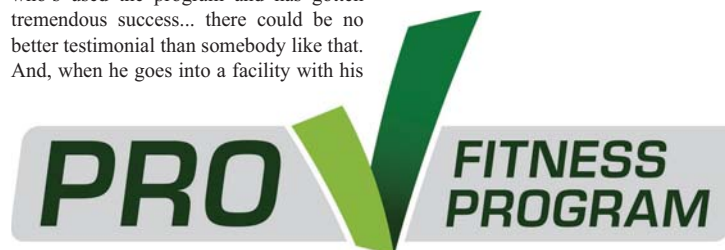


Mary Beth Bradley

**C.I.** - Can you explain the due diligence process you go through with potential club owners, both from your perspective as well as that of the club owner?

**JR** - Excellent question. I like that a lot! First of all, we want to ensure that the club owner is 100% behind our philosophy and approach to doing business. I think that's the key. So, number one, it starts with: *Do our core values match up? Do you believe what we believe?* If so, what you end up selling is not as important for me as WHY you do it.

(See *Pro Fitness Program* Page 14)





**...Pro Fitness Program**

continued from page 12

Obviously, the how is very important as well. For us, we need for the club owners to say we are going to run our club around our core values and systems. We believe that the best way to help these members coming in is to assure that they're ALL assessed within five business days of when they joined the club and that they've received some education before they're put out on the floor. That's the starting point. AND, they're not going to waive those assessments. It's going to be consistent. They're not going to waive it for any specific individual. So, are they willing to support our system and philosophy? Is that something that they believe in? We will also do 3-year sales projections. We have Excel documents where we take a look at their previous numbers and then will project out based on the number of memberships coming through the door and say, 'This is the projected number you can expect to get on board in personal training, to renew, to stay on board and we do those sales projections out for three years.' I think that's important for the owners to be able to see what the potential of the program can be because we are converting typically between 30% to 40% of new members who come on board to start on a Personal Training Package of 12 to 144 sessions.

**C.I.** - Please explain why it's so important for the system to be followed as a whole and not just having parts of it mixed and matched.

**JR** - What I do during the due diligence process is that I also want to know what kind of management team is in place. Or, do they have somebody who's capable of managing a predictable business operating system? Who's the point person for this? The system doesn't manage itself. As you heard my response to a previous question, there's a lot of components. First of all, I want them to understand the difference between being a technician, being a manager or being an entrepreneur. So, that's one of the key components. I basically tell them you guys are going to have to have somebody who manages this system, who's good at managing this, who's good at reading reports and projections and business plans. And, are you guys going to make decisions based on the numbers... based on the expectations and goals... based on the evidence? Are you going to make objective decisions as opposed to just subjective decisions? So, those are some of the key concerns that we have. That's the due diligence process for us.

Importantly, let me add that the key for our program is transitions. I like using that word because it is SO integrated. That's what club owners should realize. If we come into the club, it's not just about setting up a Fitness Consultant and Consultation Office that sells to Personal Trainers, and we do a little training with the consultant and the trainer.

It's the transition between from when the member comes in and how the Membership Coordinator presents our program. The membership tour now gets based more around the assessment than it does about the equipment or facilities. So, they have to do a really in-depth job of presenting the assessment, first and foremost. Then, booking that consultation and handing it off to the consultant. Similarly, the consultant has to do a great job in the assessment and handing that client off to the *right trainer*. So, if those transitions fall apart, the system breaks down. Again, the integration is SO, SO key. You cannot have individuals on the team in any of those departments who don't believe in the program. This is why we want membership people assessed and to go through regular assessments. *We want them to live the experience. Live the program!* Believe this is a benefit to them and see that it is a benefit. We do a lot of training with the membership department to get them up to speed on the value of the assessment.

**C.I.** - Is there a way to quantify the cost outlay necessary to implement the system?

Additionally, any outliers aside, what can a club owner expect on the revenue side?

**JR** - We've implemented the systems in very small markets and small clubs that have under 1,000 members, up to large facilities, and we've now made it affordable through monthly payments. And, if they sell an additional 3 - 4 personal training packages, the profit on those packages will cover our monthly fee. We're talking about



Jeff Russo and the Penfield Fitness Team in Rochester, New York

35 to 40% profit margins. They're going to experience increased sales right out of the gate! The analogy I look at is that for the price of maybe 3 - 4 high-end treadmills, that will pay for our entire system.

**C.I.** - Are any physical plant/capital changes or improvements necessary to implement the system?

**JR** - There is a little investment in some assessment equipment. Most clubs already have such assessment equipment. So, if they have some kind of bio impedance assessment software to test body composition, they may have to invest in a better body composition analyzer and

some of the other equipment, such as a jump test strip, a grip dynamometer and some of the basic things that we use for assessing are needed. There's obviously going to be a need for computers. Of course, we need three consultation offices, which might be require additional physical plant investment. But, Norm, don't forget how incredible the increased revenues will be to handle these early on expenses.

**C.I.** - Jeff, speaking of incredibly increased revenue, you've sent your Revenue Chart (See **Graphic on This Page**). Please tell us about those amazing numbers.

(See **Pro Fitness Program Page 16**)

Pro Fitness Program Revenue Chart

| Clubs                     | Square Feet | # of Members | Best Month Before | Best Month After | Best Year Before | Best Year After | % Increase | Date |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|------|
| Cedardale Fitness         | 180,000     | 5,530        | \$19,819          | \$57,114         | \$188,000        | \$525,460       | 180 %      | 2011 |
| Manchester Athletic       | 120,000     | 3,000        | \$34,716          | \$88,661         | \$308,000        | \$617,152       | 200 %      | 2006 |
| River Valley Club         | 86,000      | 2,600        | \$10,800          | \$198,000        | \$69,000         | \$2.1 Million   | 2500 %     | 2000 |
| The Works Athletic        | 80,000      | 8,000        | \$15,000          | \$78,511         | \$150,000        | \$505,964       | 237 %      | 2013 |
| Longfellow Natick         | 80,000      | 2,500        | \$32,000          | \$71,291         | \$320,000        | \$454,149       | 42%        | 2012 |
| Twin Oaks / Edge          | 75,000      | 3,500        | \$7,000           | \$35,000         | \$60,000         | \$275,000       | 358 %      | 2010 |
| Athletic Thunder Bay      | 72,000      | 5,000        | \$38,000          | \$108,636        | \$365,000        | \$898,288       | 146 %      | 2008 |
| Orchard Hills             | 72,000      | 2,600        | \$12,000          | \$45,930         | \$77,000         | \$353,699       | 360 %      | 2011 |
| Timberlane Athletic       | 60,000      | 1,600        | \$11,000          | \$36,015         | \$84,000         | \$165,685       | 100 %      | 2006 |
| Athletic Club Guelph      | 56,000      | 7,000        | \$37,938          | \$271,772        | \$474,000        | \$2.02 Million  | 322 %      | 2007 |
| Athletic Club Brantford   | 50,000      | 7,000        | \$27,174          | \$151,559        | \$205,000        | \$934,400       | 356 %      | 2007 |
| Healthtrax - Enfield      | 50,000      | 2,600        | \$25,000          | \$53,685         | \$200,000        | \$347,786       | 74 %       | 2013 |
| Salem Athletic Club       | 48,000      | 2,500        | \$10,000          | \$62,256         | \$105,000        | \$264,204       | 151 %      | 2013 |
| Athletic Club North       | 45,000      | 8,000        | \$45,000          | \$168,348        | \$332,000        | \$1.36 Million  | 310 %      | 2007 |
| Penfield Fitness          | 40,000      | 3,000        | \$23,081          | \$63,885         | \$130,371        | \$503,349       | 286 %      | 2008 |
| Adventure 212             | 36,600      | 3,600        | \$49,276          | \$115,478        | \$333,764        | \$778,197       | 132 %      | 2015 |
| Extreme Fitness           | 35,000      | 6,500        | N/A               | \$475,000        | N/A              | \$4.7 Million   | N/A        | 1998 |
| Premier Fitness           | 30,000      | 5,000        | N/A               | \$200,000        | N/A              | \$1.6 Million   | N/A        | 1995 |
| Athletic Amherstburg      | 26,000      | 3,400        | \$24,300          | \$105,761        | \$235,000        | \$822,012       | 250 %      | 2008 |
| Club Markham              | 25,000      | 2,500        | \$22,900          | \$101,690        | \$157,729        | \$417,400       | 166%       | 2007 |
| Island Fitness            | 25,000      | 2,300        | \$15,500          | \$95,061         | \$175,000        | \$610,000       | 250 %      | 2004 |
| Spartanburg Athletic      | 25,000      | 1,800        | \$4,200           | \$36,234         | \$36,000         | \$176,431       | 390 %      | 2014 |
| Laconia Athletic Club     | 25,000      | 1,100        | \$12,396          | \$79,580         | \$108,547        | \$655,746       | 506 %      | 2011 |
| Club Fit                  | 20,000      | 4,500        | \$3,000           | \$92,280         | \$35,000         | \$582,705       | 1567 %     | 2003 |
| Great West Abbotsford     | 16,000      | 3,000        | \$11,000          | \$52,130         | \$95,000         | \$170,354       | 258 %      | 2007 |
| Access Fitness            | 12,000      | 2,000        | \$5,000           | \$47,310         | \$73,000         | \$269,000       | 250 %      | 2006 |
| Pumps Fitness - Woburn    | 12,000      | 1,500        | \$6,000           | \$107,078        | \$58,000         | \$903,417       | 745 %      | 2014 |
| The Fitness Firm          | 12,000      | 1,100        | \$8,858           | \$71,605         | \$82,158         | \$462,165       | 463 %      | 2007 |
| Club Phoenix              | 11,000      | 1,930        | \$6,700           | \$30,520         | \$60,800         | \$198,980       | 230 %      | 2007 |
| Phoenix Ancaster          | 10,300      | 1,700        | \$4,500           | \$218,000        | \$65,000         | \$525,000       | 708 %      | 2001 |
| Atlantis Athletics        | 9,600       | 960          | \$4,700           | \$47,698         | \$36,000         | \$299,898       | 730 %      | 2005 |
| Pumps Fitness - Wakefield | 9,000       | 1,400        | \$6,000           | \$62,860         | \$58,000         | \$349,606       | 501 %      | 2012 |
| Absolute Fitness          | 7,600       | 750          | \$18,500          | \$53,085         | \$65,000         | \$235,287       | 262 %      | 2008 |
| Performance Health        | 6,000       | 600          | \$8,000           | \$54,033         | \$72,000         | \$360,368       | 401 %      | 2006 |

## ...Pro Fitness Program

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**JR** - Our biggest problem is the increases illustrated on the chart... I've got to tell you that the biggest obstacle that we have is that people just don't believe our numbers until they've talked to our references and club owners. They just don't believe those large increases! We know there's 40% profit margins. We know that 30% to 40% of all new members are going to buy a personal training package within the first 5 - 10 business days of their registration. We know that's the case. Clubs are not only doubling their PT revenues! If you look at that chart, you will see clubs doing \$1 million or \$2 million in PT sales. And, when I say a 1,000% increase, or when I say a 2,500% increase... it's hard to put that in an interview like this. Those are the numbers I'm giving to people, and they can run the numbers. We're going to do 3-year spread sheets and projections. I would even do that in their due diligence period. If a club contacts me and asks me, 'What do you think we can do in PT revenue?' I'll say, 'Give me your sales numbers. The actual memberships you sold during the last two years. Let me plug that into our spreadsheets, and let me show you, based on the 30% to 40% closing formula for 12 to 144 sales sessions, with an 80% renewal rate, what your sales numbers are going to be. Then, *you make the decision at that point!*'

**C.I.** - Jeff, I have to ask you: What's it like to have somebody say to you, '**Congratulations, Jeff, on your 20th Anniversary of your great Pro Fitness Program!**'

**JR** - As you know from having done it, as a small business owner, to be around

this long feels pretty amazing. As one of our club owners from New Hampshire, Joe Asch, said, '*Do you know who the pioneers are? They're the ones still walking around with the arrows sticking out of their backs!*' I've taken a lot of arrows but have remained true to my beliefs and core values, and I have stayed the course with this program. As a fan of Jim Collins' business consulting works, I've done a lot of 20-mile marching and built this slow and steady over a nice span of time. And, I've seen a lot of people come and go over the years. To still be around, and to be growing at this stage, is truly exciting.

Of course, we've had progress on the technology as well, and the system has improved. There's no question about it. And, I think now, more than ever, clubs in this crazy competitive market, in which everybody's trying to get a piece of the pie, have the opportunity and the potential to really differentiate themselves. What's interesting is where our philosophies were. That hasn't changed. The core values and what you see in **CLUB INSIDER** that we shared in the **June 2012 Edition**, when I just reread that, I said, 'Wow!' The nice thing about it is that we've stayed true to our core values and to those principals. They have been unchanging for 20 years. We now have 20 years in the business since we started this company. That's an exciting thing for us; it really is. And, how many people can say their principals have not changed?

**C.I.** - Jeff, I've got to mention something about that. When I received your new full-page ad, I proof-read it like I always do with all new ads. Then, when I read the part of your ad about the RVC doing \$2.2 million in Personal Training Sales, I thought to myself that must have been

a mistake. Is that some kind of a record or what?

**JR** - You know, for square-footage and number of members, we believe that IS a record... at least for New England. I'm not going to say it is a world record by any stretch of the imagination, but it's obviously something we're really proud of because, as I mentioned in that 2012 article, when I went down to the River Valley Club in March of 2000, they only had five part-time trainers on board, and they were doing \$69,000 a year in personal training! I want to be sure to get this point across today... the Pro Fitness Program and this business operating system is not just another add-on feature to a list of many different features that clubs have. **It's actually a different way of doing business. It's a change of philosophy.**

Then, the whole club gets centered around the principles of selling education, results and knowledge. First and foremost, everyone's required to get exposed to a fitness consultation and assessment so that we can assess people, diagnose people and then prescribe the best possible programs or solutions. So, that's the starting point, and everything else revolves around that, as opposed to just selling a membership which gives you access to space, time and equipment. That's the difference. So, for club operators who read an article like this, or talk to us about the potential, they have to get their mindset around that this is how they want to do business. We want to ensure that everybody, first and foremost, within the first five days of purchasing a membership, gets started with a fitness consultation assessment. It's the best way we can help these individuals. If they believe what we believe, then the program is a fantastic fit.

**C.I.** - So, the key is getting their minds right; getting the value of that assessment consultation solidified in their minds?

**JR** - I believe that's true, but I never try to convince somebody against their will. You know... I think I read that in the book **How to Win Friends and Influence People...** 'He who is convinced against their will is of the same opinion still.'

**C.I.** - Dale Carnegie's most famous work!

**JR** - But, we're interviewing them as much as they're interviewing us, and I'm

basically saying to them, 'If you're ever going to be ready for this, let us know. I believe that we can help you.' And, that's what we're looking for more than anything else.

**C.I.** - Jeff, to close out this terrific interview, are there any other things you'd like to mention?

**JR** - I'd like to focus, again, on that differentiating principle in today's market. I think that's so important that extra emphasis on it is warranted here. As clubs are trying to be all things to all people, with my years as a business consultant, I find that's a recipe for disaster. So, you can say there's two ends to the spectrum... One end is the no-barrier to entry, easy access, low-rate place where people buy access to a facility and equipment, but there's not a lot of support from an educational standpoint. We're on the entire opposite end of the spectrum where we insist on people having a fitness assessment and consultation at the beginning, and we provide them with education. I believe it was **Paul Chek** who said, 'If you're not assessing, you're just guessing.' That's the key. That's something that we really believe in. We believe, and I said this back in your 2012 edition, we have a moral obligation as fitness business professionals to sell people something that actually works and gets them results. And, as far as I've seen over the years, and what I've experienced as a club owner and a club manager and worked for different organizations, **memberships ALONE** don't do that. They can't guarantee results.

We have to go above and beyond. It's no different than going into your doctor's office and saying, 'Hey, give me the prescription,' before they do the diagnosis. It's not going to happen. I think that we've done a disservice over the years. Why are the retention rates so low? It's that approach. Why not just be honest with people and tell people? We, as an organization, have told everybody who works with us, from membership to our fitness consultants, to 'Become a solutions provider!' That's really what great sales are all about in this day and age. It's not about high-pressure sales or the old school approach. It's about becoming a solutions provider. Solutions to what? Obstacles, problems and difficulties that  
*(See Pro Fitness Program Page 18)*

### Comments From Jennifer Poljacik, COO of River Valley Club

Our successful journey with Pro Fitness Program (PFP) started 17 years ago. When we started with Jeff Russo's PFP, we really had no idea how to improve people's lives through personal training. Back then, we would give away four free training sessions with the hope that a client would show up and the personal trainer would be able to educate, assess and prescribe what was the best plan for that member to succeed. We were expecting our trainers to 'sell' themselves to the client, not even knowing if it would be a good match.

Our partnership with PFP has helped us develop our fitness program from the 2,000 members and \$66,000 annual revenue we had, to today, where we now train over 30,000 hours a year, we have 2,500 loyal members and we sell over \$2.5 million in personal training each year! With the support of PFP, we are delivering the results our clients expect!

Jeff Russo is a pioneer in the fitness industry. His vision and passion of how to systematically introduce a new member into fitness programs and guide them to real results is exactly what this industry needs more of. PFP uniquely integrates and connects the membership team with the fitness team to work together to improve the member experience through personal training, which is something to truly appreciate.

We learned to strive for excellence, and most importantly, Jeff taught us that, to be truly successful, we must foster a passion to serve others. PFP creates a culture that delivers education, results and knowledge. PFP is lead with values and a passion to do what is best for the company, staff and members, which will bring out the very best in any company. After all, isn't it our moral obligation to provide the best experience by helping our members achieve the results they come in looking for?

### Comments From Al Tassel

For the first 25 years of club ownership, I tried every way to make money in 1-to-1 training and failed miserably. Then, a little over five years ago, we implemented the Pro Fitness Program, and it turned our business from one that was struggling to one that was thriving. The revenue produced from this structured sales and service program accounted for nearly 60% of our overall sales, which after nearly three decades of ownership, afforded us the luxury to exit with very profitable terms.

My wife, Sharon, and I now enjoy working as in-club consultants implementing this amazing program in clubs of all sizes and price points. If a club has the desire to make money, can follow our proven formula and has reasonable management skills, then this program will make a huge impact on their bottom line.



## Pro Fitness Program Announces Major Upgrades to its Fitness Assessment Software

TORONTO, CANADA - Pro Fitness Program has always strived to offer the leading fitness assessment software in the industry. In order to accomplish this, leading experts in this area have been hired to develop custom programs for clients and members. In 1998, the first version for desktop computers was delivered, and it offered testing in the areas of body composition, predicted V02, and strength and endurance protocols. Clients were able to get a printout of their results and compare them to national norms based on performance based criteria.

In 2013, Dr. James Manson, the leading epidemiologist and kinesiologist in Canada, was hired to develop an updated assessment protocol. At the time, James

was working with the Cleveland Clinic and was focused on normative data as it related to health outcomes. As a result, he was able to design a custom platform for the iPad that added in elements such as functional movement screens, balance assessments and a unique protocol for the senior population.

In the next couple of weeks, a new update to the cutting-edge assessment platform will be released. Dr. Manson has been working with some of Pro Fitness' veteran Fitness Consultants and has been using their feedback from thousands of 90-minute fitness consultations, to revise the software and provide our fitness staff with the best possible tools to diagnose and prescribe individualized programs

for members. Dr. Manson is now a college professor in Toronto Canada and continues to study the data and outcomes of comprehensive fitness assessments on the general and senior populations. Information continues to increase and the evidence is getting stronger and stronger in terms of these results and how they relate to overall health and longevity.

In 2018, the company plans to transition the software from the iPad to its online personal training management software: PFP Track. Currently, when members register with a club that offers the Pro Fitness Program, they are automatically sent a digital health and history questionnaire. Once completed it gets securely stored in their client profile.

The Fitness Consultant is then able to review this information prior to his initial assessment and use it to formulate the basis for their exercise prescription and program. Currently screenshots of the assessment from the iPad are uploaded to the client profile and sent to the client. By having this feature directly in PFP Track, this step will be eliminated. With clients performing up to four assessments per year, comparative data can be tracked and graphed and clients can see how they are progressing and remain motivated. Trainers will also have access to this information and will be able to work together with the Fitness Consultant to ensure that the client is progressing and achieving his long-term goals.

### ...Pro Fitness Program

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must be revealed through the interview process and assessment that are standing in the way of getting people results! This is another thing that I've said for years, 'If you could be doing this on your own, doing it alone... you would already be doing it! So, WHY AREN'T YOU?' I think that's our responsibility as fitness professionals to basically come alongside somebody and have him identify the obstacles, problems and difficulties impairing him from getting great results, then giving him a prescription and working with him to do that. And, **I think that becomes the differentiating principle** from all the clubs that basically say, 'You know what? We're really concerned because we've got so much competition, so we're going to have absolutely no barriers to entry. If you just want to get started, no problem. Just start using the equipment.' So, that's something I really want to get across.

**C.I.** - Well, Jeff, when you look at the commercial health club market in the U.S. now, and then you add in the studio segment and CrossFit, then there actually is no telling how many facilities are competing for the same potential members. I certainly see how your *differentiating principle* in your client's operations is so important and crucial.

**JR** - I think it's the HUB of the entire fitness club. And, I want to get this across, too. The Fitness Consultant is NOT the Personal Trainer in our system. I refer to the 'Feeder System,' where you have many traditional clubs, and trainers come on board, they're required to generate their own business and their own revenue. So, what happens is that you create a competitive environment on the floor where the trainers are working against each other saying to members, 'Hey, you should train with me. I'm a better trainer than this individual.' We've worked with thousands of trainers over the years, and we know that these individuals are typically wired for service, not business

or sales. And, there's very little business or sales training done in certification courses, even to this day. So, you've got a situation where clubs struggle because trainers say, 'I don't want to sell! I don't know how to grow my business.' And, keep in mind that we work with your existing team of Trainers and get them to full-time hours in a very short period of time.

With the Pro Fitness Program, we have full-time Fitness Consultants where their role is to do proper assessments, prescribe and then sell for Trainers. Then, where we do really well, like a hotel concierge, they match the right trainer with the right individual. It's not just based on credentials but on personality, and they're able to give them the best possible solution and program to help them achieve their goal. To your point, Norm, where you talk about the initial experience, I will make the claim that we have the best educational program within the first six weeks of a member's experience in the club than anyone else in the industry. And, why I'm confident in that is because it's not just about our Initial Assessment. After the Initial Assessment, we have a demo with a Personal Trainer, we then have a follow-up with the trainer in a few weeks, which we call our Member Assistance Session. And, after that, we book in a re-assessment within six weeks, especially if the member is not working with a trainer. So, they are actually meeting different individuals within the club, developing relationships, and we're following up because we know what IHRSA reports is true... the first eight weeks are the most crucial time in terms of a member's success. Stay with the club. Continue with the club. And, go on.

Again, we have a moral obligation to come alongside these people. That's the DIFFERENCE. That's why they are joining a fitness club. It's not for the equipment. Many people have in-home exercise equipment. There is more than enough equipment in any club to get people results. It's NOT about the facility. It's about MOTIVATION... INTENSITY... EDUCATION... PROGRESSION...

**PROGRAMMING... DESIGN... EFFICIENCY...** It's about all of these areas that make a difference in which these people don't have time to get educated. That's why they need to hire educated people; they don't have time to acquire all this knowledge. Our responsibility is to give them the best support and education during the first eight weeks, and that sets them up for success. I believe we do that better than anyone.

I would add this to close. I can also say that, regardless of market or club size, the success and the numbers are very, very predictable. As I mentioned, we've worked with small market clubs and with larger market clubs. Traditionally, we've worked with the Mom and Pop independent health club owners who, again, want to make a difference in the community and want to help their members. That's who we've come alongside over the years.

Importantly, your readers need to understand that, if their core values align with our beliefs, we're not going to compromise. I really want to say that. There's no compromise for us. So, if somebody says, 'May we pick apart your system and maybe just use some of your sales training videos?' No, we can't do that. Also, as I mentioned, we have a web-based software that has all the training videos on there, it does scheduling and it does all of the sales, the tracking and commission reporting, so we've created a system that can track all of this and help these clubs with performance. But, if somebody says, 'Will you just allow us to assess the occasional member, and if people don't want to do an assessment, can we waive those?' Then, I would say that, if you're going to do this program half way, we don't want to do it with you. You're not going to be successful.

You've got to believe what we believe. If you think this is the BEST WAY to help members and get them results, and also give people full-time rewarding careers, our system is very predictable if you follow it. That's the key point that I want to get across. So, if your core values

align with ours, then you might want to consider this program. It's a lot of work, there's no doubt about it, but the benefits are there.

**C.I.** - Jeff, it is just great to talk to somebody like you. The best way to put it is this: I want you to know that I can **hear your energy** right through the phone. I can **feel your energy** right through the phone. I can **understand your energy** right through the phone. It's like you're transplanting in my mind **the feeling that you transplant to all your clients, so no wonder why you're such a great success! Happy 20th Anniversary, Jeff Russo!**

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CLUB INSIDER is happy to be able to bring this Cover Story featuring **Pro Fitness Program's Founder and CEO, Jeff Russo** to you because we believe that all the answers you need to increase your club's revenue dramatically are right here on these pages. Jeff's company is **CLUB INSIDER's** newest advertiser, and we're honored and pleased to have them on our Advertising Team! We urge you to check out the Pro Fitness Program full-page Ad on the **Opposite Page** and contact Jeff Russo to set up discussions on how they can help your club(s). Jeff can be reached at **(416) 252-5700** or email at **jeffr@profitfitnessprogram.com**.

*(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 40+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 24th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. On October 5, 2017 Cates was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. Cates can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)*