

# RAISING



EDUCATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY FITNESS CAREERS

ISSUE 5

# THE BAR

**HOW TO  
MAXIMISE  
ONLINE  
CONVERSIONS**

**PAUL  
TAYLOR'S**  
NO BULL  
APPROACH  
TO RESILIENCE

**SUCCESS  
AFTER  
COVID**  
HOW THE  
INNOVATORS  
RESPONDED

**BEING GAY**  
IN THE FITNESS  
INDUSTRY

**EXPANDING  
INTO THE NDIS**

## WELCOME FROM DENNIS HOSKING



Hi everyone

What a crazy time we're in right now! When we released Issue 4, four months ago, I'm pretty sure I didn't expect to find ourselves in the continued situation we're in right now.

For those of you who, like us here at FITREC, are based in Victoria and are living through Lockdown 2.0 and trying to run a business under these trying circumstances, our hearts go out to you - we feel your pain and we share it.

With potentially more time on your hands than you'd like, we figured a bumper issue of Raising the Bar could at least help you enjoy a good spot of reading with authors who have helpful, proven tips that can potentially help you swerve from despair to repair!

Enjoy our pages. Look after yourself and others. And keep being kind. United, we can all pull through this together.

### DENNIS HOSKING

*Founder & Managing Director*  
FITREC & HealthyPeople

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# AN UPDATE FOR OUR VICTORIAN FITREC REGISTERED PROFESSIONALS (AND NOTICE OF REGO EXTENSION)

**T**he current statewide lockdown is truly heartbreaking. Many fitness professionals and businesses in Victoria are having to cope with a loss of, in many cases, 100 per cent of income. Beyond the financial strain, the lockdown is taking a toll on the mental health of us all.

Based in Victoria, I and the FITREC team are acutely aware of the impact these restrictions are having on both our local communities and the state's fitness industry. Indeed, the impact of the current restriction is testing the resilience of industries across the board.

Recently we received a call suggesting that we campaign for an exemption for fitness professionals. The ability to visit their studio for the purpose of filming. While we remain strong advocates for the industry and for the rights of fitness professionals, the reality is that any short term gain that concessions for our industry might provide puts us at risk of further and repeated lockdowns.

Following are key considerations when considering any challenge to the existing lockdown in Victoria:

## **Victoria is officially in 'State of Disaster'**

Without question, the single goal of everyone in Victoria is to stop this secondary infection. The ease with which COVID-19 spreads means that any exemption could become a window of opportunity for transmission. Until this virus is under control, we are not going to see any return to normal in our industry.

## **Clients and members take their lead from fitness professionals**

Not just in relation to diet and exercise. They observe how we conduct ourselves in our daily lives. We have a duty to exemplify best practice. In the current environment, this means showing that we understand the importance of social isolation. Filming workout sessions, for example, in the confines of your home/yard not only demonstrates best practice, it shows empathy for the situation your clients and members are currently in.

## **If we want more respect as an industry, we need to show we are team players**

The fitness industry has always desired a closer connection to allied health and medical services. Under normal circumstances, we are a key part of preventative health and rehabilitation. At this time, the greatest thing we can offer is solidarity. With many in

our healthcare system giving so much of themselves, at great personal risk, now is not the time to be inadvertently adding to their load. Now is the time for us to say to the wider health community, 'We've got your back'.

## **There is no fitness business until this is under control**

On the 3rd August, the Victorian Premier, Daniel Andrews, stated "...if [the current restrictions] don't work, we'll need a much longer list of complete shutdowns." Again, now is not the time for any industry to be pushing for exceptions. We need to work together to get this under control. The longer we're in lockdown, the more fitness businesses and professionals are going to suffer.

For these reasons, FITREC will continue to support the government's strict short term lockdown in the hope of avoiding any further extension of these restrictions. During this time, we will continue to support all members as much as possible. Beyond our usual support, additional initiatives include:

## **Extending all Victorian registrations by four months**

The initial extension provided for all Australian registered professionals ends in September. The four-month extension is obviously longer than we are expecting to be in lockdown, but we wanted to be sure that no Victorian professional had the added expense of a renewal that coincided with Christmas.

## **Panel Q&A Sessions and income generation ideas**

Beginning soon, FITREC will host a panel of presenters with the skills and experience to answer any questions as well as provide examples of how others have broadened their earning potential during this time. Details will be posted to your FITREC home page.

In addition to the above, we've been actively working on and investing in projects to benefit our members in the years to come. We'll provide more on these projects in the near future.

I hope that you and all those in your community remain in good health and please, stay safe.

Kind regards

**Dennis Hosking**

Founder & Managing Director



# EVERY DESCENT HAS AN ASCENT

Recognising opportunities amidst tough times may be the best approach to helping your fitness business survive, according to Dr Michael R Mantell, PhD.

**N**o one faces the light of morning without first facing the dark of night.

Those with the capacity to “imagine” beyond what exists, are the ones able to accept COVID-19 for the opportunities it inspires. These business frontrunners grasp the veiled law of the entrepreneurial universe: That *every descent is followed by an ascent*.

COVID-19 has shaken up the lives of all of us.

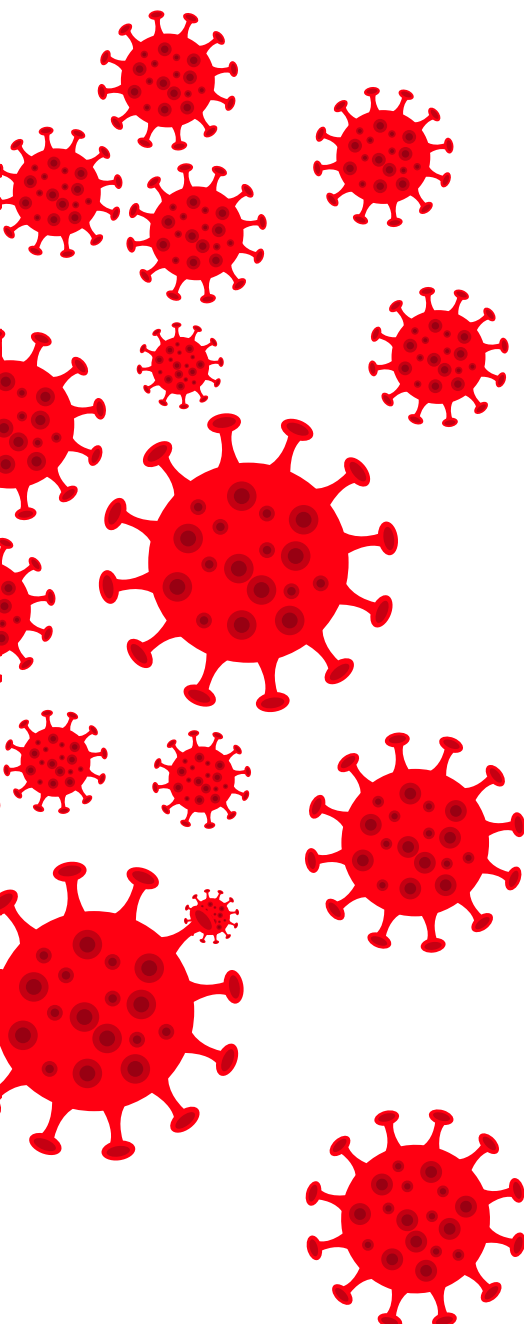
For some, this pandemic has shifted their lives in a better direction, but for a record number of others, they find themselves in an emotional tailspin of anxiety, stress, loneliness, fear and depression that’s gotten in the way of living healthier, happier and longer lives. Some are ready to give up. Others choose to live by the notion that, “even those things that stop me, won’t stop me.” One group whines over the challenges, the other looks to the future and welcomes the fuel that they know this challenge provides.

In my consulting work I’ve observed that people most attached to the way they believe things “should” be, are often those who suffer the most. Those with the resilient awareness to seize on the prospect that nothing is really broken, nothing is a mistake, are best placed to face this pandemic’s innate opportunities.





Emerging fitness industry titans are emotionally unburdened. They are emboldened to double-down on their commitment to serve as a resource for others and are vitalised by the ability to create a more holistic and accessible system for tomorrow's inevitably converging fitness-healthcare industry. They aren't gasping about welcoming back what was, but are rather aflame, looking forward to what will be.



?

**Here are six reviving questions to help you move towards creating a powerful new business model:**

- ? How have you transformed a hurdle into a success?
- ? What did it feel like when you acknowledged that an achievement occurred because of a challenge, not in spite of it?
- ? What beliefs have you had to lay to rest to be able to move forward?
- ? How have you converted your "comfort zone" into your "stretch zone," where you're more likely to take reasonable chances?
- ? What simple goals are you setting to build your new program?
- ? How are you focusing on what your business can become, instead of what it's been?

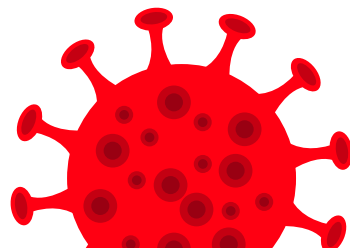
This is the gift that trailblazers are using to regroup, reevaluate, refresh their inner will to sidestep despair, and instead, reach higher than they ever visualised they could. I firmly believe COVID-19 is telling us it's time to contemplate rotating away from yesterday's siloed fitness gym business model, that's becoming starkly limited, and forge a paradigm shift towards an innovative, collaborative convergence with the multi-systemic revolution taking place in healthcare.



**Dr Michael R Mantell, PhD**

Dr Michael R Mantell is a Behaviour Science Expert and the author of four books. He has more than 45 years' experience helping people to create lasting positive change using his science and compassion-based rational emotive behaviour coaching methods. Dr Mantell's column features in Arianna Huffington's "Thrive Global", which provides "Emotional Education Through COVID-19" through easy-to-use tools, genuine support and no-nonsense information to help them thrive and grow through – not just "survive" – these emotionally unsettling times of COVID-19. He's an in-demand keynote speaker for leading health and fitness conferences around the world, and in 2013, greatist.com named him among "The 100 Most Influential People in Health and Fitness". Dr Mantell has brought psychology to the public since the 1980s in broadcast and print media including The Oprah Winfrey Show, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. To learn more [www.drmichaelmantell.com](http://www.drmichaelmantell.com)

Who is far-seeing, inventive, and resourceful enough to create tomorrow's "Optimal Health Centre," merging personalised health with exercise, mind/body education, and lifestyle medicine? Those who fit the bill, will thrive through this pandemic with vigour and prosperity. ♦





**Paul Taylor**

A former British Royal Navy Aircrew Officer, Paul is an Exercise Physiologist, Nutritionist and Neuroscientist who is currently completing a PhD in Applied Psychology, where he is developing and testing resilience strategies with the Australian Defence Science Technology Group & UTAS. He is the Director of The Mind-Body-Brain Performance Institute, where he delivers resilience, leadership and executive performance workshops to companies such as NAB, CBA, J&J, Oracle, SAP, PWC, BUPA and Medibank and the Australian Military. Find out more at [www.mindbodybrain.com.au](http://www.mindbodybrain.com.au)

# A NO BULLSH\*T APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

COVID-19 has clearly had a very negative effect on the fitness industry, and is taking a toll on business owners and employees. The below video from Paul Taylor contains some powerful lessons from ancient philosophers and even prisoners of war, that we can all use right now to help position us in a more positive mindset.





1

## HAVE YOUR PIZZA AND EAT IT TOO

### The research

A study at the Centre for Nutrition, Exercise and Metabolism at the University of Bath assessed whether an excess of calories had an immediate impact on metabolism. They achieved this by having healthy male volunteers aged 22-37 years, eat as much pizza as they could.

### The findings

Although the men consumed almost twice as much pizza as they normally would, doubling their calorie intake, the amount of nutrients in the bloodstream remained within normal range. The nutrients ingested were either efficiently used or stored, and blood sugar and lipid levels were barely elevated

compared to when only half as much food was eaten. Most interesting of all, the study shows that humans are capable of eating twice as much food as is needed with the body adapting well to the influx of nutrients in one huge meal.

### What this means

Although studies are yet to investigate whether the same is true for other groups such as women, the overweight and older populations, this study has shown that if you are a healthy young man, overindulging at Christmas lunch will not cause any immediate negative consequences to your health. Long-term over-eating is the issue, as it can lead to weight gain and obesity, and related health issues such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

THE STUDY

THE SOURCE

2

## AEROBIC EXERCISE COULD HAVE THE FINAL SAY ON FATTY LIVERS

### The research

Researchers at Trinity College Dublin studied patients with metabolic associated fatty liver disease (MAFLD). Using an exercise-only intervention coupled with repeat liver biopsies to monitor results, they deduced whether aerobic fitness was more beneficial than specifically losing weight to help treat MAFLD.

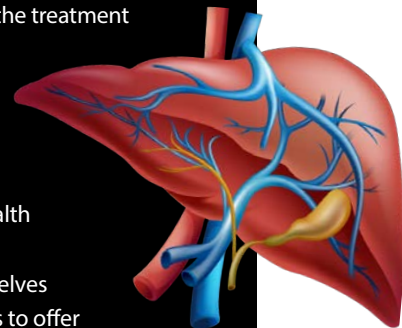
### The findings

The study found that increasing aerobic fitness was more beneficial for the improvement in MAFLD patients than weight loss itself. Researchers discovered positive results in as little as 12 weeks, in the patients participating in aerobic exercise. This study is also the first to link the interrelationship between the

improvements on liver biopsies with improvements in fitness. Researchers found that a better transition of exercise into the community setting would help with adherence to exercise and, therefore, the treatment of MAFLD.

### What this means

There is a need for an exercise referral system in the hospital and health care system. Fitness professionals and fitness businesses should align themselves with hospitals or general practitioners to offer specific exercise/training programs, which would allow patients to continue to exercise long-term.



THE STUDY

THE SOURCE

# OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE FOR MAXIMUM CONVERSIONS

The whole world is shopping online at the moment and our industry is no exception. Here's what you need to do, to maximise your online conversions.

**H**aving a website is critical, not just for online businesses but also for brick-and-mortars. Fitness centres and gyms can gain a lot by establishing an online presence for themselves.

Creating a website isn't enough though; you also need to optimise the website to maximise conversions. Here are six steps to get you started.

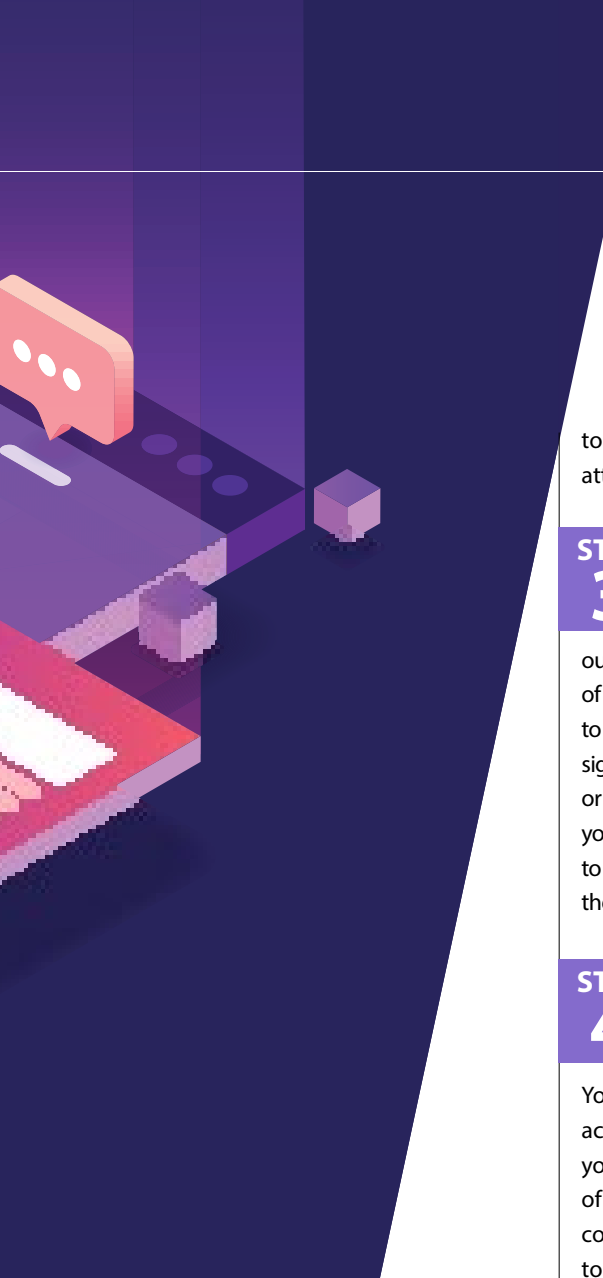
## STEP 1

### Get to know your audience

Getting to know your audience is important to optimise your website and maximise conversions. Don't jump in and design a site before figuring out what your online audiences want.

Consider creating personas to know more about your audience. These avatars should identify the ideal target audience.





Consider the demographic information, pain points, goals, and needs when creating personas.

## **STEP 2** Informative content will help website optimisation

Once you have determined the wants and goals of your target audience, you should optimise your website content. This content should be created to help your target audience make the right decisions. List the amenities available onsite, as well as your group fitness class schedule.

Consider creating a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page to inform your target audience about membership details, terms and conditions, fees, and signing up to become a member. You need to let your target audience know that you have the solutions necessary

to overcome any obstacle they have to attaining their fitness goals.

## **STEP 3** Make it easy to become a member

Most people don't have time to fill out application forms to become a member of your fitness centre. Therefore, you need to make it easier for your target audience to sign up via your site and take fitness classes or book in for a training session. These days, your potential clients will expect to be able to submit a membership application and pay their fees online.

## **STEP 4** A clear call to action will maximise conversions

Your website should have a clear call-to-action (CTA), and you should be creating your CTAs based on the specific needs of your target market. CTAs should be compelling enough for your online visitors to take action.

To maximise conversions on your website, you need to attract the attention of your online users and successfully influence them to become long-lasting members of your fitness centre.

Make sure your CTA buttons are visible and prominent. This can be achieved by using adequate white space and reducing the clutter around your CTA buttons. The size and color of your buttons are also important. The average size of a CTA button is around 47.9 pixels tall. Additionally, red and orange buttons tend to get more clicks, compared to blue and green-coloured CTA buttons.

## **STEP 5** Show social media sharing and counter buttons

Social share buttons with counters will help improve your online influence. Social proofing helps assure online viewers



## **Monica Garrett**

Monica Garrett is the Founder and CEO of Margaux Agency in Long Beach, California (USA). Margaux Agency are experts in digital marketing for health and fitness clubs. They deliver hand-curated, industry-tested, CEO-approved, managed marketing services. From design to development, from writing to implementing, Margaux Agency have what you need to grow your health and fitness business. To learn more visit [margauxagency.com](http://margauxagency.com)

about the authenticity and popularity of a website, so adding social sharing buttons can increase cross-channel promotion and maximise conversions.

A high number of shares indicates that people trust a business, so consider adding social media share and counter buttons for your Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook pages. LinkedIn is not typically appropriate for fitness and gym centres, because posting on the site does not fit with how the platform is used.

## **STEP 6** Optimise for mobile

You should optimise your website for mobile use. Mobile optimisation is important since a large percentage of online users now access websites via their mobile devices. The number of people using mobile devices to access the internet is increasing with mobile shoppers converting more, compared to desktop users.

Consider A/B testing before making final changes. The A/B testing involves checking two versions to find out which one generates the best response. ♦



**INNOVATION  
IS THE KEY**

**FOR FITNESS  
BUSINESSES'**

survival

Toni Krasicki caught up with some of the industry's most innovative hard-hitters to find out how they're responding to the pandemic.





## Toni Krasicki

A freelance health, fitness and travel writer with 30 years' experience in the industry, Toni has a Bachelor's degree in Human Movement Science and a Post Graduate Diploma in Health Promotion. Currently teaching aqua, Toni can be contacted at [tonikrasicki@outlook.com](mailto:tonikrasicki@outlook.com)

**T**he fitness industry has always rolled with the punches. When big box gyms and health club chains muscled their way into the fitness market, it seemed like every second independent gym were fearing closing their doors in response. However, the industry fought back and delivered a new concept to satisfy the crowd who wanted less of the 'big' and more in the way of a specialised service. Boutique studios mushroomed, filling the gaps and offering a one-format class model. Yoga, Pilates, barre, cycle, boxing, CrossFit, personal training, flexibility/stretch, wearable fitness, you name it – there was something for everyone.

During the past decade, another curveball blindsided the industry – the budget 24/7 gyms. Accessible and affordable, these centres that represent the high volume, low cost side of the market, greatly boosted the expansion of the fitness industry. The rapid expansion of 24/7 giants Anytime Fitness, Jetts, Snap Fitness 24/7 and Plus Fitness peaked a few years ago, but their presence prompted big box gyms to rethink their own business strategies and introduce 24/7 access at their own facilities.

Until COVID-19 rattled the world causing lockdowns and loss of business, every type of fitness business had managed to find their place in the market. Although presently, Victorian gyms are struggling through a second lockdown, overall the Australian fitness industry is looking to a brighter future.

Cofounder and Event Director at Business of Fitness, Shaun Krenz believes that as an outcome of this pandemic, health and wellness will become a top priority for everyone. "For health club operators, 2020 has been hard and I have certainly felt this in my discussions of late, but the long-term future is exciting," he says. "The most valuable currency is, in fact, health and how we feel."

When South Australian gyms reopened, Ben Barge, Cluster Fitness Director (South Australia) and National Support for Goodlife Health Clubs, says that people began re-evaluating what was

important to them. "With people not being able to go out and exercise at a gym or a park – six, seven kilometres away, it caused them to realise how important their health really is."

As Western Australia eased restrictions in mid-May, Business Partnership Manager WA for Les Mills Asia Pacific, Lee Smith says that with physical distancing in place, fitness businesses have seen close to, if not a return to, pre-COVID numbers in the group fitness space, with generally strong membership numbers too.

"Group fitness has been shining through in many gyms, as small groups were some of the first allowed activities. Gym goers, keen to get back to connect with people again, to feel the motivation of the music and a passionate instructor, happened quickly, and although the timetables were reduced along with class numbers, the classes were busy and that started the momentum."

Barge believes the key to retaining members, both during and after the pandemic, is communication. "Your clients are used to talking to you on a regular basis, so even if they aren't in a position to pay you for training right now, keep chatting with them. Because the way you treat your clients right now shows who you are as a PT. By making a five-minute phone call once a week to those clients means

***With people not being able to go out and exercise at a gym or a park – six, seven kilometres away, it caused them to realise how important their health really is.***





when they're ready or able to come back to training, they'll come back to you. Of course, equally important for managers, is to keep communicating with their team. We need to be supporting them, training them in things like Facebook Live or Zoom and leading by tackling things head on. It's important that they, like our clients, feel supported and connected through this time."

Snap Fitness has had such an increase in membership sign-ups; they are set to open 10 new clubs across the country before the year is out.

However, in the US, it's a different story. In a recent ClubIntel report ('The Peril Promise and Reality of the Pandemic for the Fitness Industry'), it mostly reads doom and gloom. Many brick-and-mortar-based gyms and fitness studios are shutting up shop, while sales of personal fitness equipment and technology have grown at record levels, along with subscriptions for online classes and streaming fitness services.

With several big gym chains or long-term clubs filing for bankruptcy or closing many of their clubs, the US fitness industry are forecasting a loss of US\$350 million a month for the remainder of the year, equating to \$8 billion for 2020.

### CHANGING THE WAY GYMS AND FITNESS STUDIOS ROLL

ClubIntel reports that fitness businesses that are nimble, highly fluid, digitally savvy, and prepared to think and act differently are the ones that will survive and thrive. ClubIntel is suggesting to have a competitive edge post-COVID, and to "seamlessly blend digital workouts, digital group exercise, digital events and competitions, mobile portability, AI, and XR (mixed realities) with a modified version of their brick-and-mortar experience."

With data showing that existing clubs and studios can expect between 65 and 85 per cent of their members to return at reopening, ClubIntel says, "the fitness facility of tomorrow will have a reconstructed value proposition that allows it to be profitable and sustainable with fewer members than before the pandemic."

CEO of Australian Fitness Network and Australian Institute of Fitness, Steve Pettit says that the industry will never look the same. Like Krenz and Barge, he agrees that the imposed restrictions have been a reminder to us all of how important our mental and physical wellbeing is, and driving the fitness industry from strength to strength. Pettit believes that there will be an increase in people willing to invest in personal trainers, with trainers using contemporary methods to reach more people.

Barge adds that the trainers who are quick to adapt to restrictions are the ones coming out on top, post-lockdown.

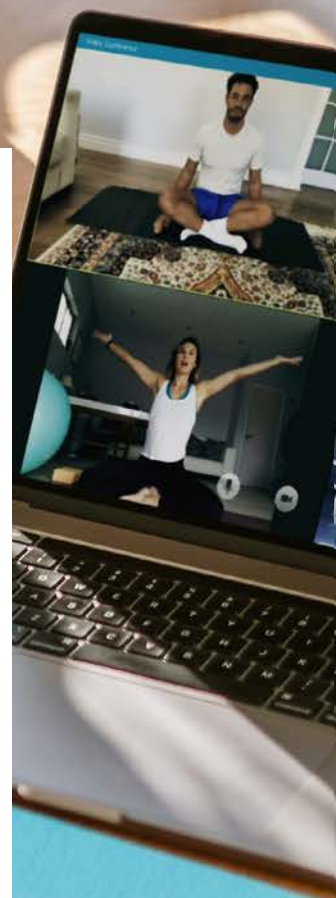
"Never before has there been such a high uptake of virtual fitness supported by a new wave of training options," says Pettit. "Gyms and fitness studios that have a balanced approach between onsite workouts and virtual workouts will be best placed to find the right mix for their members."

Smith says, "COVID-19 has been the ultimate disruptor that has forced fitness businesses to look at how they operate, what they offer and even why they operate." He has found that technology has been the big hitter here, on both a business operational level and a member level.

### GOING VIRTUAL

When restrictions forced gyms and fitness studios into lockdown the industry turned to an online service delivery model literally overnight. Smith says, "technology has always been growing within the fitness space, both at an operational level, on the gym floors and within the studios, BUT it has now accelerated and the slowing linear growth has just seen the trending graph line shoot straight up!" With over 1,000 LES MILLS™ workouts available to download, many gyms have become Affiliate Partners for LES MILLS™ On Demand, driving subscribers up by the thousands. In addition to this, our Club Partners now also have the opportunity to live-stream LES MILLS workouts to their members, which is also proving another game-changer for those clubs.

National Fitness Manager, Genesis Health + Fitness, Coaching Zone and Home Fitness Network, Sam Merza says that they moved quickly when the COVID closure announcement came through. Over four days, a group of health and fitness experts







across the business developed Home Fitness Network, an online health, fitness and wellness platform, to allow members to keep physically and mentally fit, from home.

"One of the offerings within Home Fitness Network, is live online group fitness sessions, hosted by our own fitness coaches and personal trainers," he said. "Allowing our fitness professionals to continue to operate in a virtual environment really empowered them to keep doing what they love to do most."

Powerliving Yoga Studio Manager in Sydney, Fiona Scicluna says that Powerliving have successfully taken their classes, workshops and teacher trainings online. "We now offer both in-studio classes, Livestream classes and yoga-on-demand via yogaholics, and our two 200hr teacher training programs can be taken either online or in person."

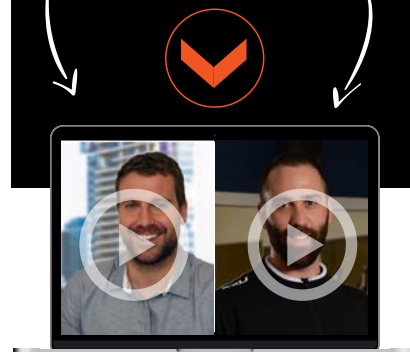
She says that the online products have proven successful, with some students preferring the online service, whilst others loving the options. "With the changing circumstances across the globe, this has allowed our products to be more accessible to our students." She admits that it's been a huge learning curve, learning to connect with students digitally, whilst at the same time still offering an exceptional customer experience.

While gyms and fitness studios have been forced to transform the way they do business, so too have businesses delivering industry education. The Australian Institute of Fitness (The Institute), have had to temporarily alter their business model to incorporate virtual face-to-face industry education. Although challenging, they quickly transformed their educational material and launched a cutting-edge solution. "Our face-to-face students quickly needed to adapt to an online mode of learning and we were very appreciative of their understanding and support," says Pettit. "The other major change was moving to a work from home model," he adds. "It's given us the opportunity to consider what the best combination of working from home versus on campus will be when restrictions fully ease."

Like some gyms and fitness studios, The Institute have been able to swing to a full online business. "It has given us the opportunity to reassess our strategy and ensure we are offering a balanced mix of online and face-to-face education," says Pettit. "We have also had the ability to engage our expert coaches on some special projects with less on-campus delivery." During the lockdown The Institute and Network ran the 'Upskill During Downtime' campaign, and offered free online education to fitness professionals.

## SEE MORE

To learn more, watch our YouTube interviews with **Cameron Prosser from BF Brokers** and **Ben Barge from Goodlife Health Clubs**.



## THE FUTURE

It's been three months since Western Australian gyms opened their doors; but some businesses are still looking at fitness options in the instance there is another lockdown.

"There is a 'new normal' in place and the most common questions I'm getting from club owners and managers is in regards to virtual fitness," explains Smith. The technology-based in-gym offering uses a big screen and a platform that can be set to offer high quality pre-recorded, virtual classes where a new class can run every 30, 45 or 60 minutes. "The thinking is, that with physical distancing in place, more classes with less people and more often would be a way to combat another disruption, should it come at us again. The investment is small compared to being forced to shut completely."

Barge says, "It's all about adapting and changing with the times and keeping that passionate energy up. So even though it is bleak for a lot of places right now, particularly in Victoria, there is a light at the end of the tunnel." ♦

## REFERENCES

- **Australian Institute of Fitness**
- **24/7 information**
- **ClubIntel Report**

*The Peril Promise and Reality of the Pandemic for the Fitness*



# the TRIBE VIBE

Now, more than ever, we need to have each other's back. As an industry this includes working together and supporting each other for the benefit of our clients and members, which is ultimately, for the good of our industry. Press play to watch each message of support.

<https://youtu.be/2IEMotiKJoo>



**Craig Harper**, The You Project

<https://youtu.be/O-SbKuwnIKg>



**Shaun Krenz**, Business of Fitness



[https://youtu.be/\\_dhEPbSAVXE](https://youtu.be/_dhEPbSAVXE)



**Tammy Curtis**, Fit For All

<https://youtu.be/BZeIWJmlpBM>



**Rowena McEvoy**, Max International Fitness College

<https://youtu.be/T-dGFDzvS2M>



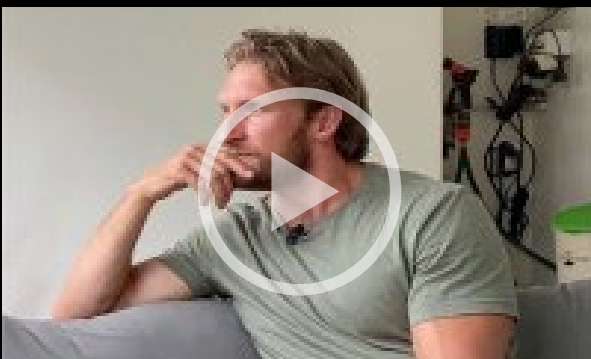
**Mel Tempest**, Body & Soul Genesis 24/7 Fitness

<https://youtu.be/ePkoigEK2U0>



**Greg Jacobs**, Stable Base

<https://youtu.be/7yINSITODnc>



**Pete Hovell**, Musta

<https://youtu.be/wSRk5sg3MGo>



**KMan McEvoy**, Max International Fitness College

# EXPANDING INTO THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY

Scott Hunt explains how becoming registered with the NDIS has expanded his fitness business.

*Our NDIS registration has opened up a whole new market for us, and provided us with more credibility as a healthcare service.*

**T**here is a huge misconception that the gym is a place for fit people to get fitter. Those who may be larger, older, injured or have a disability often believe that the gym is not the place for them. It's intimidating to walk in amongst bodybuilders and bikini models, to find yourself in a big open space full of heavy weights.

Sure, this stereotype is not applicable to everyone in our industry, but it does exist and it's one of the reasons we're not seen as the health care service we could be. When the media or the government talk about health care, personal training and gym facilities barely get a mention.

An amazing opportunity exists, however, to change this misconception.

## **Expanding into disability fitness**

In the last couple of years we've become registered with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which provides people living with a disability, the funding required to help them improve their health and wellbeing by working with a personal trainer.

Our NDIS registration has opened up a whole new market for us, and provided us with more credibility as a health service. As a result, we now receive personal training referrals from medical professionals and disability support companies.

We've also found the goals of our NDIS clients extremely varied and uniquely challenging. Some of these goals include maintaining independence, developing confidence, increasing functional



strength, enhancing recreational activities and being able to do many of the daily things that most of us take for granted.

Most experienced trainers have had a client with a disability in the past, regardless of the NDIS, if that's you that's a great first step.

There's such a broad spectrum of what a "disability" is that it's best to assess each client's individual limitations on a case-by-case basis to see if you have the skills to train them; as opposed to assuming you can train anyone. For us, the majority of our clients' disabilities are minor, which means most of our trainers can work with most of our clients.

The NDIS does not require you to gain any extra qualifications; however, it is a lengthy and costly experience for a business to become a registered NDIS provider. Once you're registered, there's ongoing compliance, service agreements, documentation and billing requirements that we in the fitness industry are used to having to abide by.

The options, therefore, to complete this process are to:

1. Do it all yourself (or have the boss of the gym you're a part of do it)
2. Join forces with a company such as Fitness Enhancement, who will take care of everything, under our own Provider number.

If you choose not to become NDIS registered, you can still do disability fitness work; however you won't be able to make the most of the opportunities that are currently out there. But if

you're happy to just have a few clients with disabilities, it probably isn't worth becoming a registered NDIS provider (or a part of a company that is). If, however, you want to make it a big part of your business, then it absolutely is!

In terms of attracting clients once you are NDIS registered, well that process is much the same as how we acquire our other clients. It's all about good marketing, great relationships and amazing results! To get NDIS clients, it's about great relationships *with plan managers and support coordinators* as these are the people who recommend service providers to clients.

The fitness industry is not the first industry that springs to mind when people think of health care or disability support. In fact, many of the companies and families that we now work with didn't realise a service like ours was available until they found us! They are often surprised and excited to hear about the role a caring and down to earth personal trainer can play in health care and disability services.

What we have done as a company barely scratches the surface of what could be achieved as an industry. The greater the success we achieve in the areas of health care and disability, the more readily we'll all be seen as an integral part of the healthcare industry. ♦



## Scott Hunt

Scott Hunt is the CEO and a Personal Trainer at Fitness Enhancement, whose main client group are people who feel "too scared to go to gyms". With locations in Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Melbourne and Sydney, Fitness Enhancement has spent the past 20 years growing into Australia's largest mobile personal training company that provides PT services in comfortable and private settings – either in our "100 per cent private" studios, or the client's own home. Fitness Enhancement is a franchise that has been providing award-winning personal trainers since 1999. To learn more visit [fitnessenhancement.com](https://www.fitnessenhancement.com)





# MAKING SALES DURING COVID

**Steve Jensen provides a reality check to help you make more sales during a time when you probably need them most!**

**W**hile some people find focusing on sales targets during these turbulent times a little crass, the bottom line is if you want your business to survive and come out of COVID afloat, then you need to be generating an income.

If you or your sales team are struggling to focus, or if there are conflicted feelings about making sales in the current climate, then here are three tips to help everyone get their head in the game.



## **TIP 1. Understand you're selling what people need right now**

We all know that health and fitness are the keys to our nation coming out of COVID with their sanity, wellness and resilience intact. You're in the business of helping people. And your services are the solutions that your community needs to come out the other side of COVID-19, living a positive and rewarding life and lifestyle. This means, people need what you have to offer – even if some of them don't yet realise it.



## **TIP 2. Check your attitude towards making sales**

Long-gone are those days of dodgy sales techniques used by sleazy car salesmen (hopefully!). Anyone charged with the responsibility of making sales these days, needs to understand exactly what they're doing. And by this we mean: salespeople are the providers of solutions that can help members and clients live happier, healthier and less stressed lives.

Every sale is a solution provided. And that's something we should all feel fantastic about.



## **TIP 3. Put your processes under a microscope**

The sales process has evolved a lot over the years, and even more rapidly in the current climate. Now is probably an ideal time to really take a look at your sales and communications processes and check that they're aligned with how your members and clients, or your desired customers, are shopping right now. Are you present in the online spaces where they are visiting? Are you using the communication channels that they prefer? In order to help more people during this time, you need to be.

You and your team need to recognise that salespeople are superheroes with the superpower to solve our client's and members' problems, alleviate their stress and ease their pain so they can live the life they've always dreamed of. And right now – more than ever – the world needs superheroes. ♦



**Steve Jensen**

Steve Jensen is the Founder and Managing Director of Impact Training Corporation and the National Sales Academy. With more than 30 years' experience, "Dr J – the sales doctor" as Steve is also known as, has a first-class reputation around the world for his inspiring presentations and his selfless passion for teaching. He is regarded as a leading international expert in sales and communication training, mentoring and implementation strategies. To learn how you can make more sales visit [www.impact-training.net](http://www.impact-training.net)





This issue, our **Featured FitPro** spotlight is on **Flic Manning** and **Murray Player**. Press play to learn more.



*"I like to talk, write and learn about humans and apply all of that to health, the brain, business, mindset, advocacy and media. Put a microphone in my hand, a camera in my face, dance shoes on my feet or a pen in my hand and I'm at my happiest."*

## FLIC MANNING

Flic is a wellness coach, personal trainer, dance educator, neuroplastician, meditation guide and a popular keynote speaker. She's the founder of Corethentic, a holistic Wellness System that brings the body and mind into alignment via specific workouts, wellness coaching and mindfulness podcasts and videos.

### MORE ABOUT FLIC



## MURRAY PLAYER

Murray is the owner, manager and head coach at Team Players Small Group Training, which is an expert functional training studio with a focus on HIIT. Murray runs all classes throughout the week, using his 20+ years of experience to transform his clients in the safest and most effective ways possible.

### MORE ABOUT MURRAY



*"COVID has changed everything... I rented out equipment and did some personal training in the car park... It's given me the chance to step back, refocus, recharge and get back to my own fitness."*





# HOW HEALTHY IS YOUR WORKPLACE CULTURE?

The truth is, your workplace culture can impact your bottom line. Katie Jones explains.

In an unhealthy workplace culture, senior leaders and managers are usually in the dark when it comes to how their employees view their company's culture. When asked for feedback on what it is like to work there, employees will generally say, "I'm loving it, it's a great place to work", or "I'm really getting the support I need to develop and grow", all whilst they are spending every second of the day creating their escape plan.

So how do you know if you have an unhealthy culture?

**HERE  
ARE SIX  
SIGNS TO  
LOOK OUT  
FOR:**





## Poor communication

.....

Clarity and communication are critical for any company. If leaders don't regularly cascade information down to employees about the direction of the company and business performance, it could result in employees becoming disengaged. It may also result in an increase in office politics, and it could cause employees to feel a lack of job security, which increases paranoia.



## Lack of overall leadership

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While some of us, unfortunately, have endured a bad manager throughout our careers, having a bad manager is not nearly as damaging to an organisation as a lack of overall leadership. If you work for a business that has a high management or staff turnover, this can be a signal of an unstable future with conflicting messaging.



## Unhealthy competition

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When it comes to achieving objectives or increasing productivity, competition can be amazing! Unfortunately, if this turns into an unfriendly competition it can begin to drive wedges between employees. By all means, implementing incentive schemes such as "Value Champion of the Month" or "Top Sales Person of the Quarter" can ensure your employees do their best work; however, if the competition gets too competitive, things can turn south, fast.



## Fear of judgement

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In an unhealthy culture, employees tend not to speak up for fear of being judged; even when they are presented with impossible goals, outrageous plans or silly ideas they are expected to implement. They say nothing to those who need to hear it or can change things, and instead they moan to their peers about the unreasonable expectations.



## High turnover

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If your employees aren't even hitting the six-month mark before they're executing their exit plan then this is the biggest sign of an unhealthy culture. If you notice this is a regular occurrence, then implement an exit interview process so you can ask these people why they are moving on after having been in the role for such a short time.



## Gossiping

.....

Another sign of an unhealthy company culture is when the office is filled with all sorts of gossip. Gossip comes from individuals who have the largest, yet most fragile, egos and who feel the greatest threat to their



## Katie Jones

For the past ten years, Katie has worked as a consultant, coach, facilitator, and L&D/HR business partner in many industries, including fitness, hospitality, telecommunications and defence. Her growing passion is partnering with sporting teams and fitness organisations. Katie has also worked with global companies, both in the UK and Australia to grow her expertise in developing teams and senior leaders. Katie recognises that investment in people is the key to a successful business, and she specialises in strategically driving companies towards a high-performance culture. Katie favours experiential learning which enables her clients to leave her training feeling confident and successful. To learn more visit [www.culturefithr.com.au](http://www.culturefithr.com.au)

job security, self-esteem, popularity or status. Gossiping, in general, is something that nobody should be doing. Even if it is not malicious, it will diminish an organisation's culture over time.

If you identify any of the above signs then chances are high that your company culture could do with some TLC. It doesn't mean that you give up; it simply means there's room for improvement – and improvement equates to greater productivity and, ultimately, profits.

If you can identify any of these elements in your own business, then now is a great time to make positive changes towards creating a work culture that will serve you and your team better. If you are in a position to influence change, **click here** to take a Culture Fitness test now, and receive a FREE 90-Day Action Plan to help start improving your culture. ♦



# I AM ME

Being gay in the fitness industry.



## Rachel Young

Rachel Young is the founder of Are You Supercharged? Rachel is ferociously committed to chewing the living daylight out of life, and she believes she was put on this planet to make a difference to people's lives and to get people moving. Simply put, Rachel loves the fitness industry and she loves nothing more than helping others to become the best version of themselves. Find out more at [www.areyousupercharged.com](http://www.areyousupercharged.com)

## What would I say to my straight allies?

I don't want special treatment. I don't want to tick a box. I want to help you to build a positive, supportive culture within which we all understand and are confident with difference; whether that be sexuality, race, gender or any other protected characteristic.

"Privilege" is an interesting concept, and in recent times we've heard the term "white privilege" a lot. Members of the LGBT+ community often experience the impact of your "straight privilege", which refers to the benefits of not feeling judged when you mention your partner's name; or when you attend a work do and hold your partner's hand, knowing your career progression has absolutely no connection to your sexuality. It's just something to think about.

I am proud to be gay. I am proud to be a woman. And I am equally as proud to work in the fitness industry.

None of these things define me. I am me.

## "Diversity". "Equality". "Inclusion". These terms have been used across the world for such a long time but are we really achieving any of them?

I was recently asked "what I would tell the younger me, 30 years ago when I started out in the fitness industry as a young gay woman?"

The thing is, in those 30 years so much has changed. For example, employment equality regulations were introduced to provide me with a legal protection because "sexual orientation" was recognised as a protected characteristic; and gay marriage has become legalised in some countries around the world. There have been some significant steps in driving equality for the LGBT+ community.

Given this, there's probably little point in me thinking about what I should or could have done differently 30 years ago. However, what I can answer is "what advice would I give to another gay person who is starting out in what I consider to be the best industry to work in – the health and fitness industry?"

Here's what I'd say:

### Don't assume

We all have learned and negative experiences that make us assume people

will judge us, make assumptions, look down on us, criticise us or talk behind our backs. Don't get me wrong, I'm not naive to think it never happens, but try and remember that they could do all of those things for a million and one different reasons, and not just because we're gay!

### Speak up

Be brave. If something's not right, speak up. We have great support networks and advocates who will support us if people, brands or industries are homophobic.

### Support others

Whether you know or think they are a member of the LGBT+ community or not, let's support each other. Let's build a truly inclusive industry where people feel safe and have equal opportunities and treatment. I believe we should focus less on 'diversity' and more on 'inclusion'. Where the focus is on diversity, this lends itself to be a tick box process where we "think" we have the right number of the right "types" of people. When this happens, diversity is not inclusion.

***Members of the LGBT+ community often experience the impact of your "straight privilege", which refers to the benefits of not feeling judged when you mention your partner's name...***





# LIVING THROUGH LOCKDOWN: A CLUB PERSPECTIVE

Health club owner Mel Tempest, shares her first-hand challenges from COVID-19 and the tips that others can take away from her experiences.





## Mel Tempest

Mel Tempest is a club owner and an innovative thought leader who turns conceptual ideas into tangible results. She's been doing this instinctively since she was a kid, and now Mel has carved out an award-winning career of applying her superpower to help businesses, organisations and individuals acquire unforeseen levels of success. Mel is the founder of Ignite Fitness Business events, and the founder and podcast host of the Gym Owner's Fitness Business Podcast. She's also the founder of the Gym Owner's Business Network, founder of the Women Leaders' Fitness Business Platform, and a Brand Ambassador for FITREC, the Healthy Ageing Summit and FIBO USA. Learn more at [meltempest.net](http://meltempest.net)

**W**hat does it take to be successful through a lockdown? No live clients. Closed until... who knows?

Strength.

And an attitude that says "I will win this, no matter what!" Shutting the doors to my club on 22nd March was gut wrenching.

I opened my club in 2003 to create my own destiny and forge my own path; to be a catalyst for change in an industry that I love and am deeply passionate about. Now, all of a sudden, I'm turned into what feels like a puppet on a string at the mercy of a government trying to contain a highly infectious virus.

Ultimately we are all facing the same challenges, united by the fact that none of us were ever likely to have been prepared for what's eventuated.

So here we are, six months later and in Victoria we're into Lockdown 2.0, just six weeks after opening after Lockdown 1. Following are some insights as to how things changed in our club.

### LOCKDOWN 1

We rented out group fitness equipment. Some people paid and some didn't.

### LOCKDOWN 2

Everybody paid!

### LOCKDOWN 1

We delivered free group fitness classes via Facebook Live. We uploaded them to a web-based app and the whole community got active.

### LOCKDOWN 2

We set up a closed members only Facebook group for classes and sold online Facebook memberships to non-members. We charged everybody \$5 per

week for the web-based app. We only leave the classes on the Facebook group page for 48 hours.

### LOCKDOWN 1

We texted and rang members consistently, and did video updates on our social media platforms to stay in touch with our members. We ran silly updates and random question posts to create some light-hearted conversations. And it worked – our members remained engaged with our club.

### LOCKDOWN 2

Repeat the above!

On opening after Lockdown 1 we gave our members 25% discount off their current direct debit membership fees for a month. And, of course, all members who had paid upfront received an extra 13 weeks on their membership

63% of our members returned after lockdown. The rest stayed on hold and participated in our free weekly Facebook Live classes. With only 10 people per in-club class allowed, we had to figure out a way to stay connected to the rest of our paying members who couldn't get a spot, as well as the non-paying ones who weren't ready to return.

The large majority who did return to the club were "gym" members (and WOW, they sure did love the wipes!).

***Our industry impacts thousands and thousands of lives for the better... we are all facing the same challenges, united by the fact that none of us were ever likely to have been prepared for what's eventuated.***



The longer we were open, the more members returned. Primarily because they were seeing online our extensive efforts to make the club safe, sanitised and social.

Some members rang and said they weren't ready, which was understandable. Many members offered to pay for their membership while we were closed, but I refused to accept their money. Some members moved out of the region, to support or be supported by their families, so we had to say goodbye.

The thing I noticed in the lead up to lockdown 2.0 was the grieving that was taking place in our club. Our members were visibly heartbroken but not just for them, for us! Their club family.

For many people life will never be the same again. For some, the mental anguish, the loss of control, and the financial devastation simply cannot be repaired. While the future may look very different compared to our past, the key to our success is to focus on what we can control, and to continue to do the very best we can with what we have.

We all love what we do; it's why we do it. We're all navigating these uncharted waters differently but remember, passion won't pay the bills. The best thing we can all do at this time is be honest, realistic, innovative and open to change. ♦

## Here are a few tips for my fellow club owners, managers and instructors.



- 1 Don't give up your digital appearance. Even when you reopen your face-to-face / bricks-and-mortar business again, you must retain an online component of your business.
- 2 If you haven't already, sit down and look at your expenses. Remove all unnecessary spending. Be brutally honest with yourself and for now, cut out anything that isn't directly helping to generate income.
- 3 Recognise that this situation is a unique opportunity to reinvent your business. Where possible, give yourself permission to think laterally about what you need to do for your own physical and mental health. It may be that you want to move on and do something else for a while; Maybe you want to work for someone else or clock off at a reasonable / regular hour for a change. Let your mind explore all the opportunities and be open to change.
- 4 Be the consumer in your business and ask yourself "would I buy from me?"
- 5 Leave your ego at the door and ask for help if you need it. Some of the greatest relationships and career successes have come from taking this very step. Asking for help demonstrates great leadership and great leaders are great role models.



## WHY CHOOSE FITREC FOR FITNESS REGISTRATION?



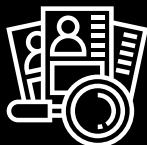
### Put an end to CEC/PDP accumulation

Ongoing development is essential, but let's not focus on points. At FITREC we've scrapped the points system and instead we focus on transparency by displaying your complete learning history. No more scrambling into an educational opportunity merely to gain points.



### Raising the bar on professionalism

When you join FITREC, you get a lot more than just registration. You get a highly visible, industry-leading FITREC profile, so potential employers and clients can gain a thorough snapshot of your industry experience. Plus, you get FITREC's unwavering commitment to help you develop and sustain a winning fitness career.



### Unmatched assistance with employment

Whenever you're looking for work in the fitness industry, FITREC (via **HealthyPeople**) will put you in front of all local employers. This service normally attracts a fee, but for FITREC registered professionals, it's FREE – every time you need it!



### We guarantee accurate information and unbiased support.

Where is your information currently coming from? FITREC is the first and only fitness registration service to provide true clarity for industry professionals around registration, ongoing development, qualifications and insurance.



### Registration that reflects you as an individual

At FITREC you're not "just another trainer". We recognise that fitness professionals differ by qualification, specialisation, experience, further learning, client focus, and peer influence. FITREC is the only provider capable of adequately reflecting your unique background as a fitness professional.



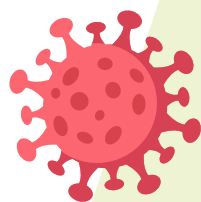
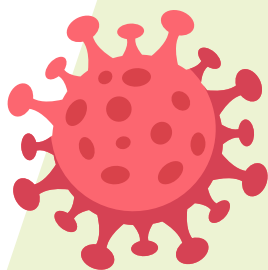
*"The structure of the FITREC system is great. It makes updating and maintaining insurance simple and easy, thanks to FITREC and their constant support."*

**Hannah Altman, QLD**

To join the FITREC family or to find out more visit **fitrec.org**

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# LIVING THROUGH LOCKDOWN: A TRAINER'S PERSPECTIVE

Take a look at life during lockdown for Susanna Canon, a personal trainer running her own business in Queensland.







## Susanna Canon

Susanna is the founder of Universal Wellness Company, which offers personal training, exercise physiology and integrated wellbeing.

Learn more at [www.uwco.com.au](http://www.uwco.com.au)



**B**eing a personal trainer during Lockdown 1.0 in the state of Queensland was probably the scariest yet most productive period of time within my company, and it highlighted a few sharable bites for business owners and operators within the fitness industry.

Despite financial and industry success plus being a leader within my field of specialised groups and disability support programs, if you had asked me to write something on business diversification and growth prior to COVID, I would have been the first to tell you that I was not an expert and deferred you to someone within my network far more qualified to assist with such things.

So what follows are four tips based on honest self-reflection, which can lead to real and immediate action and a successful build up of the only thing that mattered at the end of every day – my clients.



### TIP 1. Know your strengths

I have always been a relationship, engagement and retention guru – people first! So when forced to submit to restrictions that we could never have seen coming, let alone build forecasts for within a business that was on the cusp of major growth, my number one priority was communication.

In less than 24 hours, every client knew what was happening with his or her on-going training regime, despite the gym facilities being shut down. They also had my authentic and honest commitment that despite being just as anxious as they were about the unknowns we were heading into, together we would make it work. It was not an easy process and I had to swallow some bitter pride pills along the way.



### TIP 2. Diversify your delivery

In-home personal training under government-funded schemes such as the NDIS financially afforded me ability to take my next step for others that couldn't access gyms and other facilities where they usually trained. Despite popular opinion and literally the rest of the world doing this, Lockdown 1.0 was not UWCO's time to simply switch from face-to-face delivery into Zoom calls as a supplement – it simply does not work for everyone.

So in order to maintain the engagement of my existing clientele but also open up to a broader crowd of participation, I momentarily disrupted the

herd mentality and opted for a closed yet searchable Facebook group with free Facebook Live classes. This did not require clients to have a camera, but just themselves and a schedule tailored to the home environment. The word 'free' became a reality at this point and not some sales ploy, as this was platform was available to everyone, at zero cost for as long as the lockdown continued. The group swelled from a committed 25+ to over 210 in the final week before facilities in Queensland opened back up – daunting! But what did this group afford my business?



### TIP 3. Up-value your offering

Now that I had the attention of a group of like-minded and fully engaged individuals online, it allowed me to develop some income opportunities outside of the usual service delivery a personal trainer relies on (i.e., being there with your client whilst they exercise or train).

Throughout Lockdown 1.0 I was able to run three holistic lifestyle programs within the group with very little added time requirement on myself; therefore, maximising profit opportunity. To do this, all I needed was programming software with an app, a pre-packaged nutrition suite that I could tailor to still hold within my and my clients' health values; and finally, the courage to take a chance at elements of the fitness industry I had always resisted because they were "not my thing".



### TIP 4. Enable your business from the inside out

My website shows a diagrammatic representation of the multiple ways our clients engage with us, and this is largely a result of Lockdown 1.0. The fear of losing it all was exactly what I needed to elevate components of my business to the next level. The post-COVID version of my fitness business is completely online, with robust systems in place should isolation be required again. Our newly expanded client base trains and exercises confidently now, knowing that another lockdown will not entirely disrupt their health and wellness journey.

We did it, and you can do it too. Good luck. ♦





# THANKS FOR READING!

## TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

### SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS & SUBSCRIBE HERE

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Additionally, if you'd like to automatically receive future issues,

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