



Greetings!

Welcome to the *Mature Fitness* newsletter. We produced this document based on changing market trends and strong interest from our clients. With consumers demanding non-traditional strategies for healing, coupled with health care providers being forced to curb costs, it's no wonder fitness and wellness strategies are suddenly taking center stage.

This plays out most significantly with the inactive market — the market most often overlooked by the fitness industry! Research has shown that lifestyle behavior is the leading cause of disease, death, and premature aging. Further, research has also shown that chronic disease responds more favorably to non-traditional healing practices (exercise and wellness protocols), than it does to the allopathic system of medicine.

Now is an opportune time for fitness and wellness providers to assert their expertise and embrace new market segments that are eager and waiting to be tapped.

We invite you to get acquainted with Age Dynamics, Inc. and discover how ADI can help your club or organization reposition itself to attract these potential customers.

John Rude

President

Creating a User-friendly Environment

W for the Inactive Market

Why are you a member of a particular club? Why do you purchase certain products or services from a chosen business? What is it that causes you to return to any business for more of what you want to receive?

Generally, the underlying answer to these questions has to do with the fact that most of us do business where we feel accepted, where we are acknowledged, where we receive value for our dollar, and where we are comfortable with the environment and the people.

Bottom line: As consumers, the products and services we purchase usually reflect our own personal preferences, our values, and who we think we are and want to become.

The very nature of an athletic club or fitness center is often in direct opposition to the values and/or perceptions of the inactive market, (the non-exerciser, the deconditioned market, the senior market). It's little wonder that the inactive market is not standing in line to get in your door.

In the work that I perform with the maturity market, I often speak about de-stereotyping the older adult population; breaking down the myths and beliefs that most in this society share about growing older, and older people in general.

Let's consider for a moment that the fitness industry has a stereotype. The

stereotype looks like this: young, beautiful, tanned, hard bodies, tight-fitting fashionable clothes, meat market, competitive environment, aggressive sales approach, intimidating, expensive. As an inactive consumer, would you respond favorably to this stereotype?

You may say, "that's not my club!" Even if you have remedied that stereotype, the inactive market may still perceive your business that way, even before they enter your doors.

If you can see and understand stereotypes from another person's perspective (in this case the inactive consumer), you are headed in the right direction to put your empathy into practice, and grow your business with an untapped market.

How, then, can your business — even if it currently serves a market segment predominately under 35 years of age — begin to appeal to this huge inactive market (estimated by some to be 60% - 80% of the adult population)?

Your product must become user friendly and analogous to the market you serve!

Inside are suggestions that will help you get started. There are many more, so create an opportunity for staff and members alike to bring forward creative ideas on how to make your club user-friendly.

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SELECTED CLIENTS

FITNESS INDUSTRY

Athletic Business Conference
 California Clubs of Distinction
 Bally Total Fitness
 BODYLIFE (Germany)
 Downtown Athletic Club
 East Hills Athletic Club
 Int'l. Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association
 Keiser Corporation
 Life Fitness
 LifePlus, Inc.
 Longfellow Clubs
 Medical Fitness Association
 New England Racquet and Sportsclub Association
 Northwest Athletic Club Association
 NuStep, Incorporated.
Peak PERFORMANCE
 Washington Athletic Club

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Bayview Manor Ret. Community
 Bonell Good Samaritan Center
 Carolina Meadows Ret. Community
 Casa Dorinda Ret. Community
 Christwood Retirement Community
 Franke Tobey Jones Ret. Estates
 Friendship Village of Tempe
 Manzano del Sol Good Sam. Village
 Meadow Lakes Ret. Community
 Morningside of Fullerton
 Mount Miguel Covenant Village
 North Hill Retirement Community
 O'Connor Woods
 Paradise Valley Estates
 Passavant Retirement Community
 Pohai Nani Retirement Community
 Quaker Gardens
 Rockynol Retirement Community
 Rockwood Retirement Communities
 Sunny View Retirement Community
 The Methodist Oaks

OTHER

BankTravel Association
 Del Webb Corporation
 IDS/American Express
 Prudential Insurance
 Wal-Mart

Creating a User Friendly Environment for the Inactive Market . . . continued from front page

1. Advertisements, Brochures and Images

All of your marketing communications must express images and language that welcomes and invites this market. The "perfect body" image discourages prospects early on, because they view that as unrealistic.

By showing people of various sizes and shapes and ages (reality), prospects will feel a sense of belonging and commonalty.

2. Front Lobby

Other than ads or a phone call, this is often the first impression. Be selective with what you display in the lobby, because this is how prospects determine your business values. Avoid an over abundance of body-builder magazines and/or photos of your award-winning body builders.

Provide reading materials, artwork, displays, and photos which reflect a variety of interests and age groups. Soften hard surfaces with plants, colorful wall decor, and comfortable seating.

3. Reception and Personnel

Provide a welcoming atmosphere that causes one to feel acknowledged and accepted as an individual,

regardless of fitness level. Remember, the inactive prospect often comes with low self-esteem and needs far more support and assurance than a regular exerciser. Select personnel that represent a variety of ages, minorities, and fitness levels.

4. Marketing and Sales

Use the 80/20 rule. Spend 80% of your time listening and talking about **them**, and 20% on your product.

Learning about prospect's fears, values, lifestyle traits and goals will assure them that you have their best interest in mind. Sell value, service, and results, as opposed to features and benefits. Avoid "hard-sell" tactics.

5. Club within a Club

Most clubs are made up of huge "fish bowls" – such as gyms, pools, weight rooms, and aerobic studios, which are frightening to non-exercisers.

Soften that by creating a space where you have a "club within a club," one that offers beginners a safe, comfortable, supportive, non-intimidating experience. Once people have mastered the "basics" in fitness (terminology, equipment, safety, etc.) they will be far more confident and comfortable to exercise with the general membership.

FAST FACTS:

- More than 60% of American adults are not regularly active.
- 25% of American adults are not active at all!
- In the next 25 years the 50+ market will grow by 74%, while the under 50 market will grow only 1%!

6. Equipment

Today's sophisticated equipment can be very intimidating to this market. For example, older adults did not grow up with the fitness industry, so one cannot assume they know how to even engage the exercise.

Instructors need to offer very basic information, even to the degree that vocabulary is defined. Most clubs have instructions attached to the equipment. You may want to augment that with a user's handbook. The goal here is to help beginners build confidence and independence in their exercise experience.

7. Dress Code

Staff should be easily identified with a smart looking casual outfit. Instructors should stay away from spandex and thongs, and replace them with loose and comfortable fitting clothing. A good rule of thumb is to dress similar to your customers.

8. Programming

The function level of the inactive market is very diverse, so it's important to offer both individual and group experiences geared to a variety of fitness levels. Do not assume beginners and/or older adults want,

or need, "lite and easy." Whether someone is at 15 % or 80 % function level, they each deserve a challenging and progressive program.

9. Schedules

Schedule programs around high-use periods. The inactive often prefer a different pace, and will appreciate the greater attention you can provide. Matinee memberships have worked well for seniors. Use that same strategy for other special populations.

10. Music and TV

Be sensitive to all age and minority groups by playing the music and videos they prefer. But avoid stereotypes, such as assuming seniors prefer big-band sounds (that represents only one of many types of music mature people enjoy). Develop a music and TV plan, and then make sure all staff follow the plan.

Bottom line: Relate to your audience as they are, instead of reminding them what they are not.

*John Rude is the author of this article, the balance of which first appeared in an issue of **Club Success**, and is reprinted here with permission of the publisher, Peak PERFORMANCE.*

Check Out These Special Offers:

John Rude is now an advisory board member of the International Council on Active Aging. For more information on the ICAA, go to: www.icaa.cc and then call ADI at 800-929-2719 for a special half price membership form.

Get a special discount off the price of the great NuStep TRS-4000 seated stepper! Call Age Dynamics Inc. at 800-929-2719 and tell us you want a special price. For info. on the NuStep machine go to: www.nustep.com.

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Athletic Business

1/98 "Making the Mature Decision"

Body Life (Germany)

7/95 "The Senior Market"

Club Business

International

4/93 "The Key to 50 - Plus"

Club Success

9/96 "Images for Attracting the Maturity Market"

12/96 "Creating User-friendly Environments for the Inactive Market"

6/97 "Reaching the Maturity Market"

Hospital Fitness News

Winter '96 "Reaching Older Adults Requires Transforming Perceptions"

IDEA Today

2/93 "A Strategy for Entering the Mature Market"

8/94 "Understanding the Mature Consumer"

Retirement Community Business

Fall '97 "Captivate Consumers with Value Based Images"

Spring '98 "Health and Wellness: A New Perspective"

Summer '98 "Planning Tips for Wellness Centers"

Winter '99 "Space Travel, Aging and Wellness: What Do They All Have in Common?"

The Business News

8/23/93 "Doing Business in an Aging Society"

The Portland Business Journal

12/7/92 "Why Businesses Have Failed to Reach (the) Older Adult Market"

Wellness Management

Fall '96 "Marketing Wellness to Mid-life and Older Adults"

AGE DYNAMICS INC.

ADI helps organizations understand the consumer behavior of mature adults and how that translates into programs, services and marketing communications.

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Older adults are excited about fitness and wellness programs!

**We invite you to visit our web site
www.agedynamics.com**

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- Suggested Reading

**SEE PAGE 3 FOR
VALUABLE SAVINGS!**

SUGGESTED READING

The number one exercise in America is walking. You don't need to be an athlete to do it, it's inexpensive, and you can do it anywhere—night or day!

Walking can provide numerous benefits beyond cardiovascular enhancement—namely discovering your inner self/spirit.

Author Carolyn Scott Kortge's new book, *The Spirited Walker*, offers a wealth of easy-to-do breathing exercises, visualizations, and active affirmations that transform fitness walking into a meditative practice of awareness, spiritual renewal and physical vitality. Highly recommended.

Available in paperback. Harper, San Francisco, 1998. \$15.00

You Too Can Have An Award-Winning Mature Fitness Program – Just Ask Us!

John Rude's ideas on mature adult fitness are well respected throughout the industry. In 1996, his mature adult fitness program won the coveted **IHRSA/Keiser 50+ Gold Award**.

John developed his *e*³™ program at the Downtown Athletic Club in Eugene, Oregon. Pronounced "e-cubed" (which stands for exercise, experience, and expedition), the program goes far beyond basic fitness applications by incorporating the core values of maturity.

The *e*³ program includes a thorough

evaluation of your club and your current offerings, competitive market research, staff training, programming, and marketing materials. To add additional value, the program is offered on an exclusive basis to only one club per ADI (Area of Dominant Influence).

If you would like to have the *e*³ program for your club, or if you would like to have Age Dynamics Inc. develop a custom mature fitness program for your organization, please call us today at 800-929-271.

Age Dynamics Inc. works with organizations to provide:

TRAINING AND CONSULTING

- Corporate
- Sales
- Marketing communications
- Market analysis
- Focus groups

FITNESS AND WELLNESS

- Concept and planning
- Program development
- Outcome management
- Consumer motivation
- Personnel training