

2009 FIA STATE OF THE INDUSTRY FIGURES LOOKING POSITIVE.

The 2009 FIA State of the UK Fitness Industry provides a comprehensive audit and reports a robust performance for the 12 months to 31st March 2009. The figures are compiled by independent leisure market analysts, The Leisure Database Company.

Key figures:

- Market value of private clubs has grown by 3.2% to £2.70 billion and membership of private clubs grew by 1%
- 12.1 per cent of the UK population are now registered as members of a health and fitness club or publicly-owned fitness facility
- Membership fees have remained steady with the average monthly fee of £42.91 compared with an average of £42.37 for the previous 12 month period

Certainly there is no sign of a downturn in the Ashbourne offices, with activity levels higher than ever; we have taken on new staff as a result.



moreactive 4 life

The FIA has partnered with the Department of Health to create its own official sub-brand, MoreActive4Life, which is was launched at the end of June and will run throughout the summer. The idea behind MoreActive4Life is to build on the more general Change4Life campaign, to get more people, more active, more often! FIA members can obtain free collateral to get new club members involved in all sorts of free, fun activities: walking groups, gym sessions tailored to less active people, and day passes to see what our industry can offer. For more information visit www.fia.org.uk



Trade

Fitness Industry Association (FIA):
www.fia.org.uk

Ashbourne Membership Management is a member of the FIA. Sign up for their useful daily media review email.

Fitness Professionals Association (Fitpro):
www.fitpro.com

Work Out magazine, aimed at the independent sector: www.workout-uk.co.uk

Health Club Management magazine:
www.health-club.co.uk

Sign up for their weekly Health Club Management Report email.

Sourcing leisure industry products: www.leisure-kit.net. Again, a regular email newsletter is available.

Consumer

Men's Health magazine: www.menshealth.co.uk

Men's Fitness magazine:
<http://info.mensfitnessmagazine.co.uk>

Muscle and Fitness magazine:
www.muscle-fitness.co.uk

The Times Health Club: www.timeshealth.co.uk
Largest 'social fitness site', worth looking at.

Welcome to the new edition of The Ashbourne Advisor,

a regular newsletter from Ashbourne Membership Management.

As **Leisure Industry Week** in September (22nd-24th NEC Birmingham) gets closer and other summer exhibitions and conferences for our industry take place, we reflect on the power of networking. LIW is a great opportunity for face-to-face networking and includes CFM's exciting new initiative: IOU, Independent Operators Unite.

This is two days of networking events and seminars aimed specifically at independent sector and will provide a great platform for you to talk to gym owners facing the same issues as you.

Ashbourne will be exhibiting again at LIW this year, so we look forward to meeting you at the show.



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Ashbourne Membership Management is a leading provider of membership management services for gyms and health clubs across the UK, for more information please visit:
www.ashbournemanagement.co.uk

The Power of Networking

Networking, whether at face-to-face at events like breakfast meetings, or online via social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, is booming. For thousands of small businesses, networking is proving to be the most cost-effective way to reach new customers and to find reliable suppliers.

Yet the independent gym sector (largely all small businesses) appears to be reluctant to embrace the opportunities available.

Networking with local businesses

In every town there are now well-established networking groups which meet regularly, often for breakfast networking events. Why not get along to a meeting and introduce yourself and your club?

With these groups there is the potential not just to sell to the room, but through the room to the hundreds of people that those attendees know.

Just by getting a couple of people in a networking group to join your club, the effect of personal recommendation can be powerful, as a key aspect of these groups is to respond to the referrals and recommendations made by others in the group.

Three of the main networking groups are:

- **BNI** www.bni-europe.com/uk
- **BRX** www.brxnet.co.uk
- **4Networking** www.4networking.co.uk.

Our own recommendation would be to try 4Networking, which allows you to visit different groups in your area, see their website for more information.



4Networking has over 16,000 members, yet just a tiny number of gyms and personal trainers are members.

“People buy from people” and gyms are one of the ultimate “people” businesses, with the owner, staff and personal trainers being the key differentiators, far more than the equipment and facilities.

Networking gets you known and trusted, the best way to get your club chosen as a person’s fitness facility.

Stage networking events at your club

Networking groups are always looking for venues to hold breakfast or evening events.

Why not offer to stage one, providing a perfect way for people to preview your facilities?

You could even set up a demonstration class or a brief presentation on some aspect of health and fitness.

Business people who attend networking events are an ideal target market for gyms as it’s likely they take too little exercise, suffer from stress and need a solution to be pushed at them.

Online networking

The key growth area of the internet at present is the rise of social networking sites such as **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Don’t dismiss these sites as just being for adolescents to post up party photos.

For example, the largest group of users on Twitter in the UK is males aged 30-50, an audience every gym should be interested in.

Imaginative use of social networking sites and blogs allows you to engage with your members and potential members in a way which is far more interactive than a conventional website.

Regular health and fitness tips, updates on events and promotions, feedback from members; all this can be generated on a blog, a Facebook profile or a Twitter page. It’s a way of keeping your profile high with members between visits in a more immediate way than writing to them or emailing them or just posting items onto your website.

Entering this arena requires focus and commitment, as to start and then fizzle out is worse than not starting at all. But the potential for recruitment and retention via these sites, which are free to use, is enormous.

LIW is leading the way this year, with a Twitter page http://twitter.com/L_I_W and a regular blog, <http://liw2009.blogspot.com/>. Check them out.

Grab your name on Twitter! It’s FREE!



Twitter will either continue to grow at its current rate and in a few years be as big as Google, or it may just burn out; right now, no-one is sure. But in case it gets really big, grab your equivalent of a domain name on Twitter now. It’s free to register at <http://twitter.com> and anyone can grab any name.

So bag your own Christian name + surname plus the name of your gym, even if you don’t want to use it right now. Sampling randomly the names of independent gyms mentioned in recent editions of Work Out magazine, all the names were still available on Twitter...

Networking for the independent sector

Dave Wright from CFM has recognised the value of this and has set about creating “*the largest gathering of independent club owners ever assembled in the UK*”; IOU (Independent Operators Unite).

Based around LIW 2009, IOU is staging a series of events on September 23rd and 24th, including an evening party, free seminars, a business breakfast and much more.

Ashbourne is supporting this event, which we see as a valuable forum for owners to get together to discuss the many issues which they face at present. If you would like to know more, please email us at:

www.memberships@ashbournemanagement.co.uk