

## Membership retention



The 'R' word, Retention, featured prominently at **Leisure Industry Week (LIW)** at the NEC at the end of September. This is the annual event for the fitness industry and was busier than ever this year. Ashbourne attended some of the seminar sessions on retention organised by **Fitpro** and picked up some useful tips, which we would like to pass on. Grateful thanks to Justin Tamsett from Active Management in Australia for some of these ideas. For more info, visit [www.activemgmt.com.au](http://www.activemgmt.com.au). They have a useful free email newsletter you can subscribe to from their site. Although written from an Australian perspective, many issues facing gyms and health clubs are universal.

Here are just five quick tips, with more to come in future editions...

- Don't create retention targets that are unachievable. It's tough to achieve real improvements; just lengthening the membership of every member by 1 month would have a dramatic effect on your overall retention rate.
- Pull people into your programme of classes - group participation in fitness is one of the best ways to improve participation and a greater sense of 'belonging' to the club.
- Create a 'passport' programme - participate in one of each of x number of classes, obtain a free T-shirt/pass for a friend/discount on beauty treatment etc.
- Create a business networking club within your club. Make meeting facilities available for breakfast clubs/early evening meetings among small business owners.
- Remember the names of your members, or at least those who attend regularly! Train your staff to remember names, it's an instant 'personal touch' when people come to your club.



## Useful links



### Trade

**Fitness Industry Association (FIA):**  
[www.fia.org.uk](http://www.fia.org.uk)

Ashbourne Membership Management is now a member of the FIA.

**Work Out magazine**, aimed at the independent sector: [www.workout-uk.co.uk](http://www.workout-uk.co.uk)

**Health Club Management magazine:**  
[www.health-club.co.uk](http://www.health-club.co.uk).  
Sign up for their weekly Health Club Management Report email.

Sourcing leisure industry products: [www.leisure-kit.net](http://www.leisure-kit.net). Again, a regular email newsletter is available. If you are interested in news about property, a regular Leisure Property Report is available.

### Consumer

**thefitmap directory of gyms and health clubs:**  
[www.thefitmap.co.uk](http://www.thefitmap.co.uk)  
**Men's Health magazine:**  
[www.menshealth.co.uk](http://www.menshealth.co.uk)  
**Men's Fitness magazine:**  
[Info.mensfitnessmagazine.co.uk](http://Info.mensfitnessmagazine.co.uk)  
**Muscle and Fitness magazine:**  
[www.muscle-fitness.co.uk](http://www.muscle-fitness.co.uk)

## Diary dates

### SPATEX 08 3 - 5 Feb 2008

Hilton Brighton Metropole Exhibition Centre, Brighton, UK  
The exhibition for professionals in the design, installation, retailing, maintenance, operation and management of pools, spas, saunas and ancillary equipment.

**Contact: SPATEX Ltd**  
Tel: +44 (0)1264 358558  
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[www.spatex.co.uk](http://www.spatex.co.uk)

### IHRSA 2008 5 - 8 Mar 2008

San Diego Convention Centre, USA

The main international exhibition and conference for the fitness industry. See all the new equipment and innovations six months before LIW! Why not try to build a two week holiday in California around it??

**Contact: IHRSA**  
Tel: +1 617 951 0055  
Fax: +1 617 737 3323  
Email: [info@ihrsa.org](mailto:info@ihrsa.org)  
<http://cms.ihrsa.org/IHRSA/>

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THE  
ASHBOURNE  
ADVISOR

Issue 2



Beijing 2008™



**Welcome to our special Olympics edition of The Ashbourne Advisor**, a regular newsletter from Ashbourne Membership Management. Although it is still many months until the Olympics in August 2008, the Games represent a fantastic opportunity to generate excitement in fitness and you need to start planning NOW.

We had a great response to the first edition of our newsletter. There's obviously a fairly jaundiced view out there about the value of these things, as there was some real surprise that it actually contained something useful!

We've tried to continue that with this new one. Please have a quick read and send us your feedback by posting a comment on our website or emailing [memberships@ashbournemanagement.co.uk](mailto:memberships@ashbournemanagement.co.uk)

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](http://www.ashbournemanagement.co.uk)

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# Use sport to promote fitness ...and club attendance

Sporting fixtures create a great opportunity for themed activity in your club, so plan activities around them to maximise their impact.

Recruitment programmes and themed fitness programmes can be built around them, and so can charity fundraising, or just watching sporting events on your TVs.

On the night of the recent Rugby World Cup final, Ashbourne visited a local branch one of the large fitness chains, to find the place absolutely empty - what a missed opportunity to create a great communal viewing event, instead of enduring a night with lower than average attendance.



The fact that, depressingly, there are no teams from the British Isles in the Euro 2008 finals means that interest will be much lower than in previous championships. While from a patriotic point of view this is bad news, dare we say it, this may well be good news for clubs. There will be less temptation to stay in/go down the pub to watch the matches, sending people back in to your club instead. Every cloud has a silver lining...

As for the rest of these events, many can be used for themed fitness programmes, promoted three weeks ahead of the events and then run during the events themselves. The Olympics is obviously the biggest one of these and more detail is provided here.



## Here is a list of some of the key events in 2008 to plan around and use to maximum effect:

Six Nations Rugby - various Saturdays and Sundays from February 2nd - 15th March

London Marathon April 13th

Euro 2008 football, Austria/Switzerland June 7-28th

Wimbledon Tennis June 23rd - July 6th

Tour de France July 5-27th (unfortunately, no stages held in the UK in 2008)

Olympic Games, Beijing August 8-24th (see separate article)

Paralympic Games, Beijing September 6-17th

# 2008 Olympics - an opportunity to promote your club

They're once every four years, they remain the biggest sporting event in the world, they always create an incredible range of stories - sporting, human interest, financial, even political - yes, the Olympic Games are coming.



All that focus on fitness and athletic prowess will rub off even on those who think darts should be an Olympic discipline. You need to start planning your programme for 2008 NOW to maximise the benefits you can gain from the Games.

Athletics, weightlifting, cycling, swimming, boxing, gymnastics, rowing, judo, fencing, triathlon - all these events and more will have direct appeal to various members of your club.

Visit [www.olympics.org](http://www.olympics.org), the official site of the Olympics movement for full details about the Games, including a 'days to go' countdown (put up in your club to create anticipation?); pictures for downloading; a huge array of facts about the Games; and a complete sporting calendar for 2008. There is also the official Beijing site <http://en.beijing2008.cn>, but information is a bit harder to find on that site. The fact that China is the emerging world power, and that the UK is hosting the 2012 Games both add extra interest to these particular Games.



The Olympic torch sets off from Greece on March 24th, passing through London on April 6th, providing an early opportunity to use the Olympics as a theme and an inspiration in your club.

