


THE 10 TOP CONSUMER TRENDS

IMPACTING THE FITNESS INDUSTRY IN 2010



INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT ARE THE LIKELY FORCES EFFECTING FITNESS PROVISION IN THE NEAR FUTURE? USING INFORMATION GATHERED IN THE 2010 AUSTRALIAN FITNESS INDUSTRY SURVEY, CONSUMER TREND REPORTS AND OUR CRYSTAL BALL EZYPAY COMMISSIONED A STUDY TO HELP NARROW DOWN THE TOP 10 CONSUMER TRENDS THAT ARE LIKELY TO IMPACT THE AUSTRALIAN FITNESS INDUSTRY IN 2010.

By Celeste Kirby-Brown and Simon Hall

“The current model asks consumers to fit themselves around a focused, efficient service model – a gym-centric machine. Tomorrow’s consumers are likely to be much less compliant! They are less likely to embrace ‘fitness through hard work’. They will want fitness to be shaped around them. They will ask our industry to become more people centric.”

– Phillip Mills, Founder, Les Mills International Ltd



Technology advancements in the past ten years have created the ability for true online mobility. It is this technology that will allow clubs to shape fitness around the consumer. No longer is an online experience limited to the office or the home. Technology now offers a permanent connection between the offline and online worlds and many of the trends below are influenced or enabled by this technology.

NOWISM

It's all about what's happening right now (live) and is part of the drive for (relevant) information. Consider this:

- As a member or potential member, what if you could view the number of people in a club at any one time? Or the number of people currently on treadmills? Or the number of people booked into your favorite group fitness class?
- Real time reviews... have you heard of big brother? It's time for the rise of the 'little brother' (i.e., 'virtual lynch mobs'). Are your showers clean? Is your customer service amazing? Go online and find out what your members are thinking because this is what new members are doing before they arrive.
- The move to self-service. Why wait for someone to do it for you when you can do it yourself? 24-hour fitness anyone? There are currently 2,980 iPhone health and fitness apps and counting. So what about self-service memberships?
- Book your place in your favorite class online. Why not even book your favorite bike (like a plane seat)?
- Offering a no minimum-term contract is one of the ways that clubs could persuade members who have left to return. They want the flexibility to decide what they will do right now, which equates to wanting to avoid being locked into a contract.

LIGHTS...CAMERA...ACTION!

Now everyone is armed with the ability to be the director and producer of the latest YouTube blockbuster. Camera phones and budget video cameras are easy to use and the ability to publish to the world is simpler than ever. Not surprisingly, YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world. "If the noughties [2000 to 2009] was the decade we forgot how to spell, will this be [the decade] when we forget how to read?" Could the future of fitness look like this:

- Live video streaming of what is going on inside the club at any point in time.
- Live video streaming of a personal trainer taking an outdoor class.
- Live video streaming of an instructor in a group fitness class
- Personal trainers recording and publishing a video of an exercise they want you to practice.
- Personal trainers sending a video message of encouragement to their clients.

PERSONALISATION

It's all about you and your personal brand. Consider this:

- Members designing their own programs like 'grazing' or pick your own lollies at the movies.
- Fitness programs that include more than the standard activities of cardio and weights. Introducing personal activities to promote other areas of the club or be brave – send them up the road for a weekly yoga session.
- Lockers with computer screens in them that greet members with their colour preferences, show which friends are in the club at that point in time, and provide workout and/or training results data.
- Fitness clothes designed specifically by an individual with their

personal colour and cloth preferences, like Nike currently offer.

- Workout t-shirts with personalised messages on them from the club/personal trainer/friend/training group.
- A pop-up fitness store by Gap.

4 MASS MINGLING

Social networking goes hyper-social creating both online and offline social opportunities. We may all be twittering online and spending hours on Facebook, but we join groups and get linked in to grow our networks and, eventually, we want to meet up in person. The future of fitness could involve:

- Rock-up exercise where the destination/location is posted at the last minute. Heard of crowdsourcing and flash mobs? What about Lance Armstrong's social bike riding twitters?
- Portable exercise experiences where a group of indoor cycles are set up in Federation Square or Bondi beach. The instructor runs the class then the bikes are removed.
- Weight loss retreats for brides-to-be to loose those last kilograms before their 'big day'.
- Exercise holidays with friends, involving activities like treks or cycling, where you have trained together in the club before venturing outdoors.
- Fitness, weight loss or group competitions held in the online and offline social spheres.
- Group exercise boosts happiness, and it's healthy too!

5 THE END OF CABLES

Welcome to the wireless world where you can be plugged in with out the plugs. For clubs this could mean:

- Members connecting their mobile phones to a piece of equipment and recording their exercise activity. This data would then be available online, ready for them or their personal trainer to review.
- Personalised tracking of workouts (runs, walks, cycling, etc) and inbuilt GPS. Your workout data is stored on a website for you to track your progress and motivation.
- It could also mean the end of club passes as mobile phones hold a bar code or the SIM cards themselves are recognised by the turnstile.

GOLDEN OLDIES

We are all living longer with the 90s becoming the new 70s. Programs for these age groups are still largely an untapped opportunity. Consider this:

- Many seniors based programs thrive in communities across Australia and New Zealand with distinctive names like the "Never 2 Old" program.
- These activities could be tracked and used to earn rebate points from health insurers.

MINI-MES

The adultification of kids is moving down from 13 to 6 (eek!). For fitness clubs, this could mean:

- Kids fitness programs focus on adventure-based exercise.
- Gyms become designed specifically for kids (e.g., the My Gym Children's Fitness Centre).
- Specially designed websites to encourage and educate children (and their parents) about the importance of exercise.
- Personal trainers for children.
- Equipment specifically designed for kids.
- Gyms using gaming to keep kids hooked in, like NexGym.

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LOW-TECH

A growing reaction against our high-tech world is the need for a space to unwind, relax and escape away from the stresses of everyday life. For fitness clubs this could include:

- Exercising outdoors in green spaces.
- Community-focused groups exercising together.
- Using public spaces and minimum equipment, perhaps with the inclusion of non-traditional exercise opportunities like community gardening, lawn mowing, and charity work.
- Belly dancing classes.
- A class that simulates the feeling of flying (e.g. Reebok's Jukari or Cirque du Soleil type programs).

EMBEDDED GENEROSITY

This is the opportunity to give your time, care, money or skills as part of your normal purchase behaviour. Consider these concepts:

- The member gives a day of their time to charity and they get a free personal training session – ‘Give a day – get a workout’.
- Bring in your old trainers (which the club will send to kids in Africa), and get \$10 off your monthly fees.
- Turning workout miles into a charitable donation.
- Drop off your home exercise machine and pay no joining fee. The machines are then passed onto local charities or community groups.
- Work group and working bees are held by gyms as an alternative form of exercise. Clearing rubbish, gardening, etc.

ECO-EASY

Making it so easy to be green you don't even notice. For clubs this could include:

- Recycling the water used in the showers in the club to water the garden.
- Recycling water from the pools and showers used for waste water.
- Using recycled materials for the construction of the building and interiors.
- Reusing the heat from pool halls to heat the water.
- Using solar or wind energy for the club.
- Creating the energy for the club through the watts generated by people using the treadmills and bikes.
- Banning the use or sale of plastic bottles in the club.
- Growing veggies and fruit in the club gardens that are then sold at the club café

To read the full report or to download a copy go to www.fitnesssurvey.com.au/trendreport. **ufm**

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