



How Will In-Club Technology Affect Fitness Pros? Part II

Aug 1, 2006 12:00 PM

Gregory Florez

Scott Goudeseune, president of The American Council on Exercise (ACE), and Dr. Cedric Bryant, ACE's chief science officer, discussed in-club technology's effect on fitness professionals in last month's column. We'll continue to look into the future with these thought leaders.

Gregory Florez: How can club owners and managers facilitate and encourage the use of these new technologies to maximize their effectiveness and get buy-in from their staff?

Scott Goudeseune: Technology can be intimidating, particularly for hands-on professionals. Often, the initial response can be to "go back to the things I know and trust" rather than embracing these new tools. Club owners can help immensely with patient education and training. Continued follow-up is key. They also need to show their professionals how technology can provide a strategic edge for them.

Cedric Bryant: The macro trend during the past several years has been some version of functional and balance training. Every manufacturer is now rushing to come up with their spin on these modalities. As this trend continues to grow, it is critical that trainers understand not only how the equipment works, but also (and more importantly) how to match particular client populations with the right equipment. I worry about the faddish quality of some of these machines. They are sold as tools that can be used for every type of client. This is not always the case. Many special populations including seniors may not be ready to use this equipment. Trainers must have the skills and knowledge to understand which clients can use these machines as well as be able to take clients through micro-progressions on these new technologies.

GF: In looking down the road in 10 years, can you give our readers a few ways in which you think they will use technology to help their clients?

SG: It will be similar to semi-private and small-group training being offered now. Technology will allow trainers to manage many more people. This allows trainers to provide virtual touches instead of live touches in between training sessions in a much more robust way. Clients will always want to meet with professionals in person. This will not preclude the option for doing small, group-based training using much more sophisticated streaming video and modalities that are not yet even on the market.

With the deconditioned and those who use in-home health care, personal trainers will have basic functional equipment or kits for these clients. They will teach beginner movements and be supported by online video instruction. Telephone training will also continue to grow, particularly with the new Web technologies that allow for free long-distance phone calls. In-home studios will be equipped with Web cams for greater interactivity with trainers.


CB: Looking objectively, we are not reaching sedentary people, and it isn't getting any better. Also, many people can't find the time to fit exercise into their lives, and we are unlikely to get significant numbers of these people into clubs. Most people don't find exercise interesting or stimulating. Trainers will use technology tools to make exercise more time efficient, accessible at home, and more engaging and more fun using different kinds of emerging technologies.

GF: How will ACE be preparing its professionals for these new club technologies?

CB: We're taking the approach of a counselor. ACE will help its pros get on the right career track.

Club owners must remember that they can't stop technology. You must involve your professionals in this new wave from the beginning.

Gregory Florez is CEO of FitAdvisor Health Coaching Services and First Fitness Inc., which was rated as the No. 1 health coaching online training service by *The Wall Street Journal*. Gregory can be contacted at gregory@fitadvisor.com.

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