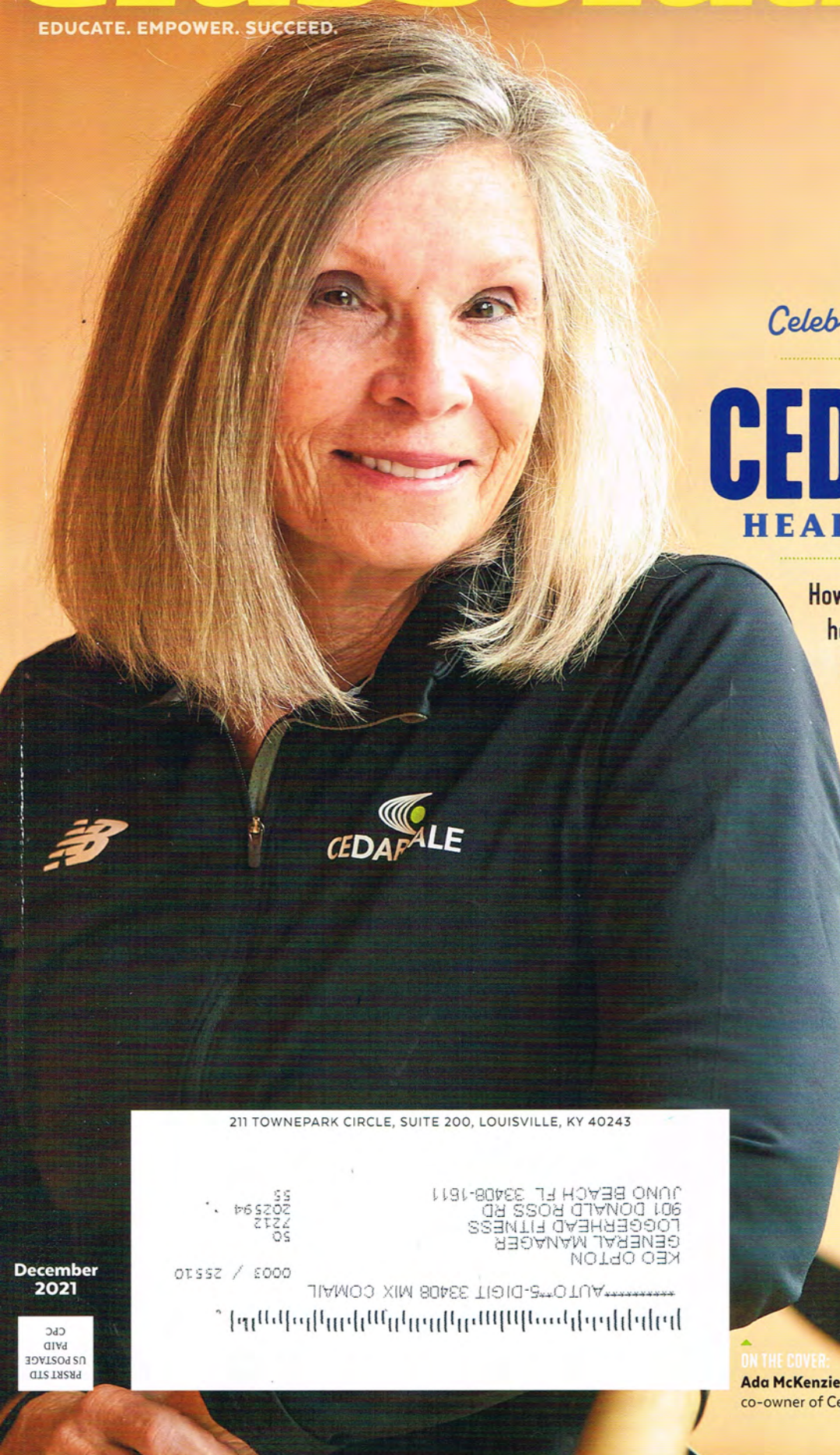


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Celebrating Half a Century

CEDARDALE HEALTH + FITNESS

How the 50-year-old facility
has navigated a fire and
pandemic and is still
standing strong

➔ p.22

PLUS

**THE BEST FITNESS
ACCESSORIES
FOR TODAY'S GYM**

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FEEDBACK TO
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**EXPERTS SHARE
THEIR INDUSTRY
OUTLOOK FOR 2022**

▲ **ON THE COVER:**
Ada McKenzie, the
co-owner of Cedardale.

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OPERATIONS

Two operators share their current hiring challenges and provide innovative solutions.

OVERCOMING CURRENT HIRING CHALLENGES

Industries across the economy are facing a slew of hiring and staffing challenges in light of the Great Resignation and continued consequences stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to recent Club Solutions Mastermind Group meetings, these challenges are also affecting health clubs, with many operators reporting difficulty filling positions ranging from front-line staff to senior management.

Rick Opton, the owner of Loggerhead Fitness in Juno Beach, Florida, said his gym has been challenged with finding part-time staff, trainers and Group X instructors.

"For example, it's been harder to find new yoga instructors and the ones we have found have become used to doing one-on-one sessions or very small classes, and getting paid a lot more money," explained Opton. "We can't afford to pay them the rate they were making during the pandemic. Not many personal trainers have crossed our paths either. I attribute this to less people training – many people are still at home on the sidelines – so demand is down, and it's harder for trainers to make money."

For Leah Seacrest, the corporate vice president of fitness and a co-owner at Remyen Fitness, with locations across the

U.S., finding qualified staff and retaining them has also been a challenge.

"This has required us to take a hard look not only at the verbiage of our job descriptions but also compensation packages," said Seacrest. "Over the past few months, we've even had to do an overhaul on the duties of our positions and think of ways to attract the best of the best. We like to ensure we are pulling in qualified candidates, as our belief hinges on the fact you cannot give a stellar customer experience with sub-par employees. This belief permeates through our training and retention programs to ensure we are keeping our employees happy and focused on growth and development."

With these challenges in mind, Club Solutions Mastermind Group members shared several key strategies for hiring and retaining top talent, outlined below:

■ OFFER UNIQUE BENEFITS

Like many operators, Opton is not in a position to raise wages, so instead he is offering more benefits to attract staff. This includes a flexible work schedule, free personal training for part-time employees, and a free membership for them and one other person in their household. "I even have a meal benefit that my full-

time and almost full-time employees get, which includes an IDEAL NUTRITION prepared meal," said Opton.

■ UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY

In addition, Opton has started using Sparkhire.com to filter out poor candidates, which requires applicants to submit video interviews and provides a more customized hiring approach for employers.

"I used Indeed and while it got me leads, many were not good," said Opton. "That is why I turned to Sparkhire.com. It's a unique and very user-friendly video interviewing platform and is reasonably priced, too. It vetted out candidates by asking them to answer 10 questions using their phone camera to record their responses. As you can imagine, you can glean a lot of information from body language, eye contact, etc. You get a very good sense of their personality, humor, seriousness and more. I liked it a lot and I can even share the interview with other team members. As reviewers, we can rate – using a five-star rating – each of the candidate's responses, then as a team we see an overall rating."

Other Mastermind Group members also suggested Sprockets and Career Plug as additional tools to consider.



LEADERSHIP



How to Best Serve the Other 80%

Ensuring exercise at your gym leads to a lifelong habit.

Today, many club operators are focused on attracting the “other 80%” of the marketplace who are not currently members of gyms.

However, as more and more clubs succeed in this effort, the fact is this consumer is a bit different than the ones a club may be used to. Many people in the “other 80%” may not have set foot in a gym before, let alone used a piece of selectorized strength equipment. They probably don’t know about the importance of engaging your abdominals when planking.

As a result, clubs need to be sure to not only emphasize the “why” of maintaining an exercise routine, but also the “how.”

I’ve seen this first-hand in my personal experience when starting Pilates a few months ago. At first, I was simply just trying to “keep up.”

As I’ve progressed, I’ve since been able to devote more attention to proper movement — paying attention to my form and how my core is engaged. That’s not even to mention mastering proper breathing techniques as you exercise. The more I practice, the more things are clicking.

My point is exercising is easy. Becoming good at it is not. Therefore, clubs need to ensure they’re educating this new population of exercisers on how to exercise properly. This will prevent them from getting frustrated and giving up, or even worse, injuring themselves.

Patience in beginning a new exercise program is key.

With this in mind — and as your gym hopefully begins attracting more and more of the “other 80%” — here are some best practices and strategies to keep in mind to better serve this population:

- Require new members without a history of exercise to work with a personal trainer at least once — albeit complimentary, if possible — or go through an onboarding seminar to learn the basics.
- Educate members on the importance of proper breathing, and how to recognize if the muscles they should be using during certain exercises are the ones they’re actually engaging.
- Check-in with members at the two-week, 30-day and 90-day mark to see what progress they’re making.

Attracting members of the “other 80%” to your gym is awesome. However, don’t stop there. Do your best to ensure this population is successfully onboarded into an exercise routine to ensure it becomes a lifelong habit, and not just another failed attempt at being healthy. This population needs care and empowerment to be truly successful. **By Rachel Zabonick-Chonko**

WISE WORDS

“THE EXECUTIVE TEAM AND I HAVE MAJOR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR BUSINESS AND ARE COMMITTED TO BRINGING PREMIERE FITNESS EXPERIENCES TO THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE TO INSPIRE OUR MEMBERS TO LIVE LIFE WELL.”

Paul Rothbard
on his return to CEO of In-Shape



▲ Paul Rothbard.

STAT TRACKER

48%

According to Oberlo, “There are 3.78 billion social media users — which equates to about 48% of the population.”

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

According to Seacrest, hiring challenges are real and widespread. As a result, operators need to consistently think about hiring and retention strategies and think outside the box to get ahead.

“These challenges are affecting literally every industry, so it’s important to make sure to stay in touch and be open-minded to shifting — if and when needed — in this climate,” said Seacrest. “Look to others who are thriving for ideas on how to improve. It does require digging in deep and perhaps changing some of your processes if needed. Think outside of the box. Sometimes increase in pay isn’t necessarily a viable option nor the best path. Beefing up compensation packages can include things like extra days off, free services and other perks. Listen to podcasts, read leadership books and audit your processes as needed to overcome.” **By Rachel Zabonick-Chonko**

Interested in learning from other operators and sharing best practices? Consider joining a Club Solutions Mastermind Group. Email Bob Surface at bob@peakemedia.com for additional details while spots last.