The future of Personal Training

Anthony Spark
Introduction

The fitness industry is an exciting and engaging place to be. As society becomes increasingly aware of the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle, the need for personal trainers will also increase.

The range of activities available to exercise enthusiasts has never been better.

In Australia we are blessed with parks, gardens, beaches and other dedicated outdoor areas in which to exercise.

There is massive number of different sports and competitions available for most of the public at affordable prices.

Social media provides potential athletes with the opportunity to collaborate with other potential athletes and arrange social groups to participate in any number of sports and games.

Within health clubs the opportunities are also vast. Once upon a time our gyms were filled with bodybuilding machines. Now you can participate in HIIT, endurance, crossfit, mobility, core strength, yoga, and so on. You can jump into classes from Zumba to CRX Works, there’s small group PT, bootcamps, aqua aerobics, guided meditation, mums and bubs, older adults and a whole bunch of other activities.

Currently Fitness Australia claims 25% of the current Australian population exercise regularly. 10% use health clubs. 15% play sport or engage in structured activity. It’s exciting to have so many people taking their health seriously, however 75% of the population are not exercising regularly. 63% of Australians are overweight or
obese. What do the PT’s of the future need to do to maintain the current market plus engage that additional 75% of the population in physical activity?

I asked some of Australia’s best thought leaders from the Fitness Industry what they believed were the most important skills for future trainers. Some of their responses are included.
What’s required in the future?

Here’s my top eight attributes trainers of the future must have in order to be successful.

› Better educated
› Coaching skills, Enhanced communication skills, Better listeners
› Softer approach to intensity
› Creative training styles
› Deal with different numbers of clients at once
› Real eating knowledge
› Respect our boundaries
› Be known for something
Better Educated

According to IHRSA (International Health Racket Sportsclubs Assoc) the third biggest trend in the Fitness Industry in 2014 is better qualified trainers. I agree, being qualified in the current market is not enough. There are plenty of trainers, but there is still room for great trainers. Get qualified with a reputable institution, and then invest in going and specialised education.

*Trainers will need to have endless tools in their bag of resources and be extremely well educated to deal with the modern day client.*

— Greg Porter, Krunchies Bootcamps.
Become better coaches

Trainers of the future must develop exceptional people skills. We must be able to empathically relate to older and younger clients, interpret body language and become better listeners. Knowing when to work with a client, when to refer them to another specialist and when to have a non-exercise training session will be crucial in the future.

*Trainers of the future will focus less on the body and more on the person inhabiting the body.*

— Craig Harper, Harpers Personal Training

*Mindset and how human emotions are pivotal to the success of the clients health & fitness goals!*

— Greg Porter, Krunchies

*Trainers will need to have exceptional coaching skills to understand what their clients are ready to change. The days of expecting people to simply do what they are told are gone.*

— Andrew Simmons, Vision PT
Develop a softer approach to intensity

In order to bring about a physiological response to training, the client must train at an intensity that creates discomfort. In the current market, too many trainers think the training is all about pushing the client as far as they can go. In order to feel like they are delivering the best workout, many trainers treat every client like an elite athlete. I believe we turn away many potential clients with this attitude. If trainers of the future are going to engage the 75% of the market not currently exercising, they will need to soften their approach. The key to exercise adherence is finding a physical workout the client enjoys so much they want to do it for the rest of their life.

The fitness professional of the future will need this skill – how to emotionally engage with their client/member to ensure they are a returning customer. To be invested in their training goals on an emotional level.

— Michael Cunico, Fitness First Australia
Creative training styles

Given that only 10% of the market use a health clubs means future trainers will need to come up with alternative methods of engaging clients in activity. Whilst I’ve never participated in a class, I love Zumba because the creators have developed a program where people attend because they love the music and the movement and they don’t even know they’re exercising! They are just there to party!
Deal with different numbers of clients at once

The days of only dealing with clients in a one on one environment are limited. There will always be those clients who want and need massive amounts of attention. However, in order to engage more people in exercise, future trainers must be able to engage clients in small groups and large groups. Training becomes far more affordable; clients get to build relationships with other participants and trainers can generate significantly more income per hour.

*Future trainers must be versatile in running groups.*

— Jody Hutchinson, Good Life Health Clubs
Real eating knowledge

Trainers of the future do not need to become nutritionists or dieticians. They do need some basic knowledge about healthy eating (which is quite simple) and loads of knowledge on how to support clients in long term behaviour change (which is quite challenging). If a client has a specific condition relating to diet then a nutritionist may be required, but most of our clients need to learn healthy habits. How many clients really want to weigh and measure everything they eat anyway?
Respect our boundaries

Trainers of the future must be confident enough to know what they know, and refer clients for things they don’t know. Or answer the client, ‘I don’t know the answer to that, but leave it with me and I’ll get back to you’. Then do some research and get back to them. In order to be part of the health solution of our society, future trainers need to understand where they ‘fit’ then work with other health professionals to bring about creative solutions.

Global megatrends like obesity and an aging population, mean that health, and improving it, are high on the agenda of lots of conversation, both around the water cooler and in political circles.

— Mike Cunico Fitness First Australia
Be known for something

Trainers of the future will get lost in the crowd unless they can become recognised as being outstanding for something. Beige is not a great colour for a trainer of the future. Trainers of the future must be remarkable at something. Future trainers will choose their market and become an expert in solving that market’s biggest problem.

Trainers will have the opportunity to bring service and personal interaction back to our clients.

— Greg Porter, Krunchies Bootcamps

Service or product to ensure it is not simply a commodity.

— Michael Cunico, Fitness First Australia
Where to from here...?

If you want to know more about where you can go to learn to be a successful future trainer, or enhance your current business, please give one of the team a call on 1300 WYN WYN (1300 996 996)