

PERSPECTIVE



FILEX 2017 PRESENTER

REFLECTIONS OF INDUSTRY LEADERS

In turbulent times, putting 'people first' will hold you in good stead, says the President of Active Wellness.

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I'm committed to people first. Without the people component of our fitness equation, nothing else matters. As technologies continue to emerge, develop, and disrupt, one thing that becomes more and more apparent to me to focus on is the dynamics that will *not* change in our industry.

Everyone, including me, has an opinion on all the things that will change with regard to trends, technologies and prognostications on the future. You've doubtless read about and heard people discuss the need to place more focus on group fitness, wearables, branded group fitness experiences, 'big data' and consumer analytics, functional training spaces and programming, Heart Rate Training, medical integration (prevention and rehab), corporate wellness and 'smart club' initiatives, among others things.

These are all valid considerations – indeed it could be detrimental to your business to ignore them. But what do we know about what won't change? I assert that the human element is unwavering, and that there is an opportunity to focus on this going forward.

People will always need socialisation – we are, after all, social animals. To this end, the importance of a third-place environment – the place that people want to be when they aren't at home or work – is not going away for a great many of us. If you make your environment appealing for third-place activity, through providing spaces for people to lounge, work, eat, drink and socialise, as well as work out, they will actively want to spend time at your club. Even introverts, who may choose not to interact directly, gain motivation by being around others. Human energy is appealing.

People also need progression and variety to continue making fitness gains – and you and your team provide the best way of achieving this, through delivery of new classes, personal training, small group workouts and the latest training concepts. Many business models have failed due to the lack of progression they offer. Having an emphasis on program

evolution will give you the edge over fitness facility models that lack progression or variety.

Human expertise is not going away anytime soon – if ever. Technology can complement the core offerings of fitness facilities, but not replace the skills and know-how provided by our people. By providing clients and members with an overall holistic approach to fitness and wellness, the service delivered by our fitness professionals will stand the test of time.

As you can see, I'm passionate about the power of people in making a business truly exceptional – and I'm very honoured to have the opportunity to share my insights and experiences when I return to Australia to present at FILEX 2017 in April. I was last with my Australian and New Zealand friends at FILEX 2008 – I can't believe it's been nine years and can't wait for my return!

The sessions I'll be delivering during FILEX will encompass the numerous lessons I've learnt through many successes and many mistakes over three decades in this industry. I'll share a comprehensive summary of what I believe are the best practices in service, sales, retention, management, leadership and strategy. I look forward to connecting with many of you over what promises to be an incredible weekend.

Bill McBride is President and CEO of Active Wellness and BMC3 health club consultancy. An industry veteran, he has over 25 years' experience leading and managing all aspects of commercial health clubs, medical fitness centres and corporate fitness sites. Bill has served as Chairman of IHRSA Board of Directors, and on the Industry Advisory Board for the American Council on Exercise (ACE).
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Read about Bill's FILEX 2017 sessions, including his presentation at the Business Summit on Thursday 27 April, and register for the Business Gold Pass to enjoy the best weekend of your year, at filex.com.au/presenters