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FORECASTING STRONG MARKET GROWTH IN 2021 FOR THE RIGHT FITNESS CONCEPTS

A cultural shift is happening in the fitness landscape as gym operators adapt, change and alter their offerings to cater to customers.

BY RICK MAYO, FOUNDER AND CEO, ALLOY PERSONAL TRAINING

The fitness industry has been changing for the better over the last several years. For example, healthy foods have become more popular, more affordable and more available. On-demand training is more widespread, and niche gyms and studios have emerged to deliver unique classes for consumers in virtually every fitness segment.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 lingering in 2021, the fitness industry will grow this year, with strong market growth trends in a few main areas. Whether you are an investor or a trainer, here's what you need to know about the fitness landscape, as it looks right now.

Three Main Growth Concepts

The health club industry is worth more than \$96 billion globally with about 174 million clubs spread out around the world, according to [Statista](#). In the United States, membership fees at health clubs account for about 60.4 percent of the total industry, and there are about 41,370 clubs throughout the country. What's more, a whopping 39 percent of U.S. citizens are currently members of a gym.

So, what's going on? Why is the fitness industry growing so rapidly, and which aspects of it are

likely to grow the most in the next few years?

Here are a few growth areas to be aware of:

1. Higher-end fitness classes and personalized offerings. Personalization is everything for the modern consumer. Just take a look at our daily lives: [71 percent of customers](#) feel frustrated during impersonal shopping experiences, 91 percent of customers are more likely to shop with brands that provide personalized offerings, and 98 percent of marketers say personalization advances customer relationships.

In fact, personalization is visible in virtually every aspect of commerce, including the fitness world. Although budget gyms have been around forever, high-end fitness offerings have emerged to carve out a new niche in the fitness world.

Designed to cater to discerning customers who want a personalized, high-quality fitness experience, high-end fitness establishments allow fitness enthusiasts to enjoy boutique wellness experiences, and the specialization they demand in virtually every other aspect of their shopping lives.

This personalization aspect is especially critical when we consider the future of the fitness industry. As people migrate to gyms and boutique studios with varying goals, injuries, priorities and desires,

it will become especially important for gyms to cater to these personalized and specific desires. The gyms that do this best will be the ones that continue to grow in the coming years.

2. Convenient offerings. Once upon a time, there was nothing convenient about going to the gym. Most gyms were out of the way, located in mildly industrial parts of a given city and offered a rigid, set schedule of courses.

Today, though, that has all changed.

Thanks to things such as on-demand fitness offerings, digital courses and personal training, gyms have become amazingly convenient. In fact, most gyms today go out of their way to cater to customers rather than it being the other way around.

Here's an example: Gym patrons who are 50 years old or older with a history of knee surgery and an unwillingness to visit a gym's physical location because of the COVID-19 pandemic have more options today than they have ever had before. They can access live or pre-recorded classes

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with their trainer, which they can take from the comfort of their own home, or one-on-one personal training sessions in their home or the empty gym. Many gyms also offer personalized apps, dietary recommendations and more for their customers.

In a world where customers expect convenience, health club operators are delivering.

3. Blends of technology and human-to-human interaction. Gyms used to be all about one-on-one human training. Although there's a lot to be said for that, there's also a lot to be said for technology. Fortunately, today's gyms are combining the two.

Today's fitness franchises take the approach that customers are experts about their bodies. They know what they need and what they want to focus on. The function of gyms is to deliver a combination of personalized training and tech-assisted convenience that can help customers reach their goals.

In practice, most gym operators are doing this in a few ways. Apps, for example, are a popular illustration. Apps are convenient and a helpful

blend of technology and personalized advice. One-on-one training via digital courses or pre-recorded classes are another example.

As the fitness organization continues to shift and change, the marriage between technology and personalization continues to grow and adapt, as well. As this marriage becomes more tailored and established, customers and fitness franchises alike will benefit from the ongoing partnership.

Looking Forward: The Future Growth of the Fitness Industry

The fitness industry has undergone some serious shifts in recent years. In addition to industry-wide health trend changes (such as shifts from measuring illness to measuring prevention and wellness) and bone-deep changes in the systemic organization of health care and fitness offerings, there is a wider, cultural shift happening in the fitness landscape.

Today, people want to work out how and when they want. Customers demand highly technological offerings that tailor to their needs and preferences and allow them to focus on their unique goals. And as the 50+ market continues to grow, gyms around the country are adapting, changing and altering their offerings to cater to customers accordingly.



BIO

Fitness business entrepreneur Rick Mayo is founder and CEO of the Alloy Personal Training Franchise system. His business journey began with his original personal training studio, which opened in Roswell, Georgia, in 1992 and is still going strong.

In 2010, Mayo started Alloy, a personal training business platform. Alloy's customized client programs, business systems and technology tools grew to serve over 1,000 licensed fitness facilities worldwide. Mayo then launched Alloy Personal Training franchise in 2019 to deliver a turnkey franchise opportunity encompassing the entire personal training business model from build-out design, through equipment, business systems, technology platforms, marketing and more. He has been an advisor to organizations such as the Gold's Gym Franchise Association and the American Council on Exercise, among others. In 2019 he was named Fitness Business of the Year by the Association of Fitness Studios.