

GYMYI exclusive Q&A with Steve Pettit, CEO of the Australian Institute of Fitness

GYMYI had the opportunity to gain some expert insights into the Australian Fitness industry landscape with this very informative Q&A with Steve Pettit, CEO of the Australian Institute of Fitness.

GYMYI had the opportunity to gain some expert insights into the Australian Fitness industry landscape with this very informative Q&A with Steve Pettit, CEO of the Australian Institute of Fitness. Focusing in on the reopening of gyms across Australia and what the future of our industry will look like for Gyms, Personal Trainers and their clients, we ask Steve for his views on the "new normal" and the short term and longer impacts it will have on the industry. GYMYI would like to thank Steve for his precious time and we hope you enjoy this exclusive Q&A.

GYMYI - At GYMYI, we have noticed that trainers are having to quickly adapt due to the COVID-19 restrictions, with more trainers using GYMYI's "train anywhere" feature. What has been the biggest area the AIF has had to adapt to due to COVID-19?

STEVE - The biggest area in which the AIF has had to adapt would be with the temporary halt on our popular face-to-face teaching and the subsequent launch of our Master Trainer Online Plus+Program™. Although challenging, we were able to quickly innovate and launch a cutting-edge solution to cater for students who prefer a face-to-face learning environment, yet through virtual means. The other major change was moving to a work from home model, our team has been outstanding at embracing the move and it's given us the opportunity to consider what the best combination of working from home vs on campus will be when restrictions ease.

GYMYI - What has been the biggest impact of COVID-19 on the AIF and your customers?

STEVE - When the traditional fitness industry was switched off overnight that obviously had a significant impact on the AIF. We pride ourselves on providing qualifications that lead to careers in fitness. When it was unknown what a future in fitness would look like or when Gyms and Fitness Studios would reopen it created some uncertainty in the market. With the recent announcements that the Fitness Industry is once again open we have seen an increase in the number of students wanting to enter the fitness industry as there are going to be a lot of opportunities. From a customer perspective our face-to-face students quickly needed to adapt to an online mode of learning and we were very appreciative of their understanding and support.

GYMYI - There is a lot of talk in the business community surrounding the need for businesses to innovate to stay alive and remain relevant. How have you had to change how you operate both in the short and long term?

STEVE - Despite the COVID-19 period being a very difficult one there will be a lot of learning and opportunities created. I don't think a business's need to innovate is anything new, the need has simply been intensified by recent events. We continue to look at ways of improving our student and team experience through the use of integrated systems that are underpinned by seamless integration. As long as businesses have their customers at the centre of their decision making they will remain relevant and better prepared to innovate in the right direction.

GYMI - Have you seen any positives that have come out of this shut down period for your business and indeed the industry itself?

STEVE - For the AIF we have been able to swing to a full online business, it has given us the opportunity to reassess our strategy and ensure we are offering a balanced mix of online and face to face education. We were very happy to run the 'Upskill During Downtime' Campaign through the AIF and Network where our goal was to positively impact 10,000 fitness professionals by offering free education. It was a nice way to give back to our Industry and the passionate professionals within it. We have also had the ability to engage our expert coaches on some special projects with less on campus delivery, and their input is creating some exciting developments in our key programs!

For the Fitness Industry it has forced a number of providers to look at complementary technology solutions to support their members, never before has there been such a high uptake of virtual fitness supported by a new wave of training options.

GYMI - What major changes do you see happening with regards to the Gym / Trainer relationship as Gyms look to reopen their doors?

STEVE - There will be 2 groups of PTs, those that can't wait for the doors of their Gym's to reopen and those that have identified an alternate way of conducting sessions to service their clients. A number of our partners are offering some great re entry incentives to their PT teams to give them the opportunity to reestablish their client base within Gyms and Fitness Studios. PT's have always been a really important group as they assist member retention through offering expert advice, it will be interesting to see what creative ways PT's and their gyms can come back together as they assist their members and clients to achieve their health and fitness goals.

GYMI - Do you see any changes to the traditional pricing and membership models in which gyms and fitness studios have survived on up and until now?

STEVE - Yes, however this isn't different to any other period. The Fitness Industry and gyms / fitness studios within it have remained viable through evolving their business to remain contemporary in the prevailing market conditions. As the Fitness Industry gets back to work new trends will materialise, the use of physical facilities vs virtual fitness will continue to adjust and technology will continue to provide consumers with additional options. Gyms and Fitness Studios that have a balanced approach between onsite workouts and virtual workouts will be best placed to balance their offering to find the right mix for their members. What a member is prepared to pay will simply be an outcome of the value of the service offered.

GYMI - At GYMI, we have developed an App that connects Gyms and Trainers, offering a new model of "gym rental by the hour" to Trainers and their Clients. This new model has no lock-in contracts – Do you think the Australian Fitness Industry is ready to adopt such a flexible model?

STEVE - I believe the Fitness Industry is ready for innovation as evidenced by some great technology that is complementing our traditional services.

The importance of flexibility has been a huge theme during COVID-19 restrictions and gyms and trainers have had to be flexible and adapt to the changing environment.

GYMI - Do you think there is a chance that qualified trainers, who have previously left the industry, may be enticed back, even on a part-time basis, if they have a more flexible "pay-by-the-hour" gym rental model?

STEVE - As the Fitness Industry has evolved we have seen a shift from fitness complementing a career to fitness becoming a career. If a PT was looking for a more flexible approach to work with a gym a 'pay as you go' type model could be appealing. This needs to be considered in the context of risk ensuring that the Gym / Fitness Studio, PT's and Clients are all covered from an insurance perspective.

GYMI - Now for the big question...What do you think the Fitness industry will look like upon reopening and when do you believe it will get back to 'normal'?

STEVE - It will never look the same as it did pre COVID-19, the phased reopening will test the Fitness Industry as costs are turned back on and members are phased back into Gyms and Fitness Studios. More people than ever will be willing to invest in Personal Trainers with more trainers reaching more people in more contemporary ways. We have been reminded of how vital our health and wellbeing is, so I actually think the fitness industry will go from strength to strength.

GYMI - Thank you very much Steve.

The Australian Institute of Fitness is the largest fitness training organisation in Australia with campuses located in and around every major Australian city.

For further information regarding The Australian Institute of Fitness, please contact info@fitness.edu.au or visit the website at fitness.edu.au

GYMI - for gyms and trainers - GYMI is an Australian innovation and is the best personal assistant for your gym or training business. Built from the ground up, specifically for the fitness industry, GYMI is a powerful smart phone app that helps you run your business and make your life easier. Fitted out with many exciting and practical features, GYMI can help you get back up to speed in preparation for your gym or fitness business to reopen.

GYMI features include;

- Gym Search – get your gym on the map for Trainers to find you and book space instantly
- Rent gym space by the hour
- Earn extra income fast – offer gym space by the hour to Trainers and their clients
- Contactless payments - Safe and secure powered by STRIPE.
- Social Distancing calculator coming soon - Set and control your gym & studio capacity limits
- Custom booking platform for instant bookings, outdoor or indoor sessions.
- Plan sessions ahead of time by sending invitations and reminders to clients/members
- Reduce Overheads - Trainer-client sessions paid on the app are automatically covered with Insurance for indoor and outdoor workouts.
- Live Dashboard – watch your income grow – it's addictive!
- Look like a pro – instant, flexible and professional.

GYMI is free to download on iOS and Android - Visit www.gyymi.com for details

For further information regarding GYMI, please contact ian@gyymi.com or visit the website at www.gyymi.com

Contacts

Ian Hunter Gray
0412512262
<mailto:ian@gyymi.com>