DEFINING Luxury

Service and Clinical Excellence

An Interview with Michael Motta, President, Plus One Health Management

EDITORS' NOTE *Michael Motta is Cofounder of Plus One Health Management and President and Founder of www.PlusOneActive.com, an Internet company providing fitness expertise to individuals seeking a custom health and fitness program. Motta previously served as Director of Training and Research at New York's Sports Training Institute. Before that, he was an Assistant Professor, Lacrosse Coach, and Assistant Football Coach at the University at Albany, State University of New York, where he also earned a BS in biology. He received his MS in physical education from Ithaca College and completed postgraduate training in applied psychology at Columbia University's Teachers College.*

Michael Motta

COMPANY BRIEF *Founded in 1986 and based in New York, Plus One Health Management (www.plusone.com) is a medically based health and fitness consulting firm, specializing in the design, staffing, and management of high-quality centers in corporate headquarters, hospitals, and hotels. Its facilities are dedicated to the improvement of health through physical activity, nutrition, spa services, and wellness.*

Are you happy with the growth of the brand?

The growth of the brand has been great, especially in the variety of industries we service. We're now working with firms in the technology, media, oil, and financial services industries. So the diversification has been great.

What services do you provide, and how has your offering evolved over time?

We're about taking care of people who have never exercised, who want to exercise at a different level, who have special conditions, or who just want to feel better. Our focus is customer service and clinical excellence. There's much more awareness of physical activity, nutrition, and wellness now than there was 20 years ago.

The brand is now national. Which areas are you looking to for growth?

We want to grow geographically to be able to compete with our three or four major competitors. Our targets – large corporations – are in urban centers, so Houston and Los Angeles are important markets, and we're trying to expand in Chicago and San Francisco.

Is it challenging to differentiate in your market?

One thing we're doing is working with client ownership to get LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certification. Every one of our existing clients is asking us how to find materials, finishes, equipment, cleaning solutions, and clothing that are more environmentally friendly. So that has really differentiated us from the competition.

We also have a technology platform that enrolls people and is environmentally friendly because it's paperless. It's a great way to market the services in a very efficient, seamless way. It tells our clients' employees which programs are available, lets us know if they're interested, and gets them through the sign-up and payment procedures. It makes it easy for companies to manage the process and bring employees on board.

Do you partner with experts in other areas like nutrition?

Another differentiator for us is our staff of clinical directors. We have directors of nutrition, physical therapy, physical activity, design development, human resources, and finance. They all work together to research, test, pilot, package, and market programs, enabling our GMs to roll out sound, clinically proven programs at the site level.

Is there an understanding among companies of the importance of these health and wellness offerings?

The demand is there; it's one of the top requests among employees. Employees come to their workplace and ask, "Where is the cafeteria? How long is my commute? Where is the fitness center?" So it's all part of the package.

How close is the individual client relationship?

Very close. We do personal training, nutrition advising, physical rehabilitation, and physical therapy. There's nothing more satisfying than helping somebody get healthy.

Has technology played a major role in the way you customize programs?

The human touch is what makes the difference. Technology is a tool that enables us to manage the touch points and make transactions, giving us more time to focus on someone's real issues and help out.

Are you still heavily focused on the hotel side of the business?

We have a great team of people who manage that division for us, and we picked up an outstanding partner, Strategic Hotels & Resorts in Chicago. They own and operate about 20 four- and five-star properties. We helped them develop their own spa brand called My Spa, and we rolled it out in two locations: The Fairmont Chicago and the InterContinental in Miami. We're also working with a casino group in Saint Charles, Missouri, called Ameristar.

What should an executive of a company who is looking to install this type of product be looking for?

First determine the size and scope of the facility that is appropriate for the employee population. It needs to fit within the culture, because it has to be a place where people feel comfortable. Second, make sure the environment is safe. People should be properly screened, the equipment must be safe, and the right emergency systems need to be in place. Finally, make sure it's utilized properly, which is achieved through marketing and service delivery.

Is it challenging to attract people who can sustain the growth you've achieved?

We're unique. A typical health club need is to drive sales – we don't have that. We get the people who are more interested in making you healthy than making a sale. That's part of our culture. We've been around for 22 years, and we created some things that are special: our mission, values, and employee recognition.

Is your Web site an informational tool?

In 12 months, we're going to have a whole new platform built on Microsoft's .NET technology. A lot of our companies want to offer something to people who aren't necessarily in the headquarters. So providing a technology highway that has off-ramps to different programs will be an advantage.

How critical is it to have the metrics in place to monitor results?

We have good data on participation. Utilization is harder to achieve because there are not very good standards out there, but we're collecting the data. The next step, which is part of our new technology package, is creating a dashboard for results. So those are the three key elements of data we're working to collect. ●

The Hearst exercise room at Plus One

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