

Conference Agenda 2026

Tuesday October 27th

9 a.m. Registration

10 a.m. Opening Remarks

10:15 General Session – The Adversity Advantage – Rodney Allgood

Sponsored by TMI Sustainable Aquatics

The Adversity Advantage is a transformational experience created for corporate teams and professionals who want to thrive – not just survive – through life's toughest challenges. This presentation speaks directly to the reality of adversity – career disruptions, leadership pressures, personal loss and financial setbacks and how to transform those moments into fuel for growth, innovation and resilience. Rodney equips corporate audiences with the mindset tools to rise stronger, perform under pressure and lead with clarity, confidence and purpose. Through powerful storytelling, emotional connection and actionable strategies, he helps teams recognize that adversity isn't the end of the road – it's the moment where true leadership and greatness begin.

11:05 Facilitated conference attendee networking and connections – Meet your peers!

Noon Lunch – included with registration

1:20 General session – topic TBA

2:20 Breakout – Stop Filling a Broken Funnel: Less Guessing. More Guiding – Jeffrey Pinkerton

Every health club wants more members. But attracting prospects is only half the challenge. Helping them succeed is what builds a better business.

In this session, we'll challenge some of the fitness industry's most common sales and onboarding practices with one simple philosophy: Less Guessing. More Guiding.

Today's consumers don't need more options—they need more confidence. They don't need another tour of treadmills and televisions. They need a trusted guide who can recommend the right place to begin. Learn how to transform your sales process from information gathering to intentional recommendations, creating first experiences that build confidence, connection, and consistency.

Whether you operate a single club or a multi-site organization, you'll leave with practical ideas to rethink the traditional club tour, improve sales conversations, create more intentional onboarding pathways, and guide members toward the experiences most likely to become lifelong habits.

Less Guessing. More Guiding.

2:20 Breakout – Panel – Facilitating Menopause Programming in your club

Continued

3:30 General Session – The Self-Service Shift: Redefining the Member Experience –

Today's members expect convenience, flexibility, and control—from booking to billing and everything in between. This session explores how self-service is reshaping the member experience, reducing operational burden, and driving higher engagement. Learn how leading clubs are empowering members while freeing up staff to focus on higher-value interactions

5 – 7 p.m. Opening Reception and Trade Show

Dinner on your own followed by networking in the Riverside Lounge

Wednesday October 28th

7:30 a.m. Breakfast – Included with Registration – Announcements**8:15 General Session – Improve Retention – Improve Revenue – Dr Paul Bedford**

Sponsored by Digital Revenue Systems

While most agree that improving retention is a major issue for health and fitness providers, very few organizations successfully tackle the problem. As a sector that has mastered the art of selling, we have, at the same time, struggled to hold on to the majority of our members for any significant time. In this session we will dispel the myth that it's hard to improve retention. We'll identify the top 10 factors that improve retention that cost almost nothing to implement and identify the key metrics you should be monitoring on a monthly basis.

By the end of this session attendees will be able to:

- Explain why retention is not the opposite of attrition
- Identify some of top 10 factors impacting retention
- Describe low cost no cost interventions that have an impact.
- Identify a key activity that can add an additional 7 months to a members tenure.

9:15 –General Session – The \$100K Decision: 6 Questions That Determine If Stretch Will Win (or Flop) in Your Club – Evans Armantrading

Adding recovery isn't a trend — it's a strategic decision. Before you invest in space, staff, or certification, learn the six high-stakes questions that separate profitable stretch departments from expensive distractions. This session will help you evaluate demand, margins, culture fit, sales ability, service capacity, and scope—so you move forward with clarity, confidence, and competitive advantage.

10:15 General Session – Conversational Agility – Suzi Wear *Sponsored by InBody*

Every conversation shapes the culture of your organization. This session introduces the Conversational Intelligence (C-IQ) model, a neuroscience-based framework for understanding how language and trust influence collaboration, engagement, and results. Participants will explore tools such as the Conversation Dashboard to recognize trust and threat dynamics in dialogue, and the Ladder of Inference to slow down assumptions and create shared meaning. Through discussion and practice, leaders and employees will learn how to listen to connect, ask discovery questions, and transform everyday interactions into opportunities to build trust, strengthen relationships, and foster a culture of partnership.

Continued

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Outcomes:

- Review how the Conversational Intelligence model connects neuroscience, trust, and communication effectiveness in the workplace.
- Use the Conversation Dashboard and Ladder of Inference to recognize conversational patterns, manage reactions, and create space for understanding and collaboration.
- Implement conversational behaviors that build trust such as listening to connect, being open to influence, asking discovery questions, and co-creating shared meaning

11:15 Breakout – Defensiveness in Conversations/Turning Tension into understanding – Suzi Wear

Even well-intentioned conversations can trigger defensiveness—especially when feedback, expectations, or change are involved. This interactive session helps participants recognize the signs of defensiveness in themselves and others, understand the underlying causes, and respond in ways that de-escalate tension and keep dialogue productive. Using principles of emotional intelligence and conversational awareness, participants will explore practical strategies to stay calm, listen with curiosity, and communicate in ways that rebuild trust and understanding—even in challenging moments.

Outcomes:

- Understand common verbal and nonverbal signs of defensiveness and emotions that may trigger these reactions.
- Apply techniques to reduce tension, foster psychological safety, and support productive, respectful dialogue.
- Gain strategies for responding to defensiveness with curiosity and composure, fostering understanding and preserving the relationship.

11:15 Breakout – From One Table to Six Figures: The Blueprint for Building a Profitable Stretch Department – Evans Armantrading

What if one table could generate \$10K–\$20K per month in recurring revenue—without buying another major piece of equipment? In this tactical workshop, you'll learn the real-world framework for launching, pricing, selling, staffing, and scaling a stretch therapy department inside your existing club. Walk away with a clear implementation roadmap—not theory—so you can turn recovery into reliable, high-margin revenue.

12:25 Lunch**12:25 Quick Connect for Owners and Managers – Tradeshow with Lunch****1:30 Breakout – The Digital Evolution of Pilates: From Classical Roots to Hybrid Growth – Nichole Jardine**

This interactive session explores how Pilates studios and fitness clubs are evolving toward hybrid models that combine live instruction with digital and on-demand experiences. Nichole will share how this shift can help stabilize revenue, reduce reliance on instructor availability, and make Pilates more accessible to a broader range of members.

The session will conclude with a 30-minute movement experience that takes participants through the evolution of Pilates from classical foundations to contemporary programming and today's more dynamic, athletic styles.

Continued

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2:30 General Session – Grow Something Worth Staying For: Culture is the soil. Retention is the harvest – Samantha Irwin

Mission statements. Core values posters. Team pizza parties. None of that is culture. This session digs into what culture actually is, what kills it, and how to build an organization where great people want to stay.

3:30 Breakout – AI –Facilitated Discussion**3:30 Breakout Panel – How to build a 5-star Pool Program****5 p.m Tradeshow and Happy Hour**

7:15 Group Dinner – Included with registration – No Host Bar Followed by networking in the Riverside lounge

Thursday October 29th

8 a.m. Breakfast – included with registration – Opening remarks and announcements**9 General Session – How Identity, Not Intensity, Drives Long-Term Exercise Adherence– Dr Paul Bedford**

Most people don't stop exercising because they lack motivation. They stop because they never truly saw themselves as someone who exercises.

In gyms, studios and leisure centers, we invest heavily in programming and facilities, yet long-term adherence is shaped earlier and far more quietly. It's shaped by identity.

In this session, I'll show you why helping someone shift from "that's not like me" to "that's just what I do" is one of the most powerful things a fitness professional can influence and how small, repeatable behaviors are what make that shift stick.

Grounded in behavior science and over two decades of retention research, this session is designed for fit pros, instructors, coaches, PTs and operators supporting members who've never truly felt like exercisers.

We'll explore how exercise identity forms, the critical early weeks where risk and opportunity are highest, the "Snakes & Ladders" identity model, and the common onboarding and programming mistakes that quietly undermine adherence.

You'll leave knowing what to change immediately, with practical behaviors, language and actions you can apply straight away to build confidence, consistency and long-term retention.

9:50 Prize Drawings from Tradeshow – Must be present to win!**10:10 FitLife Annual Meeting – FitLife member clubs only, please.**

In this meeting, you'll receive updates on finances, conference attendance, and more. We'll also share FitLife's challenges and successes, along with key initiatives and priorities. Your feedback and input are important to us, and we hope you'll join us.

Safe Travels!