



A COMPETITIVE FITNESS OPERATION IS INTEGRAL TO MEMBER EXPERIENCE: 1000 Hills Fitness Elevates the Role of Fitness at Columbine Country Club

SITUATION SUMMARY

In 2017, Columbine Country Club, located in Columbine Valley, Colorado, set the ambitious goal of creating a national class fitness operation that plays well both in and outside of the private club fitness industry. To invigorate their fitness offering and improve the member experience, the Club's general manager sought 1000 Hills Fitness' expertise.

“Columbine Country Club selected 1000 Hills Fitness for their expertise, forward-thinking mindset, and ingenious programming. Their thoughtful approach to developing our fitness program is central to our success.”

Michael Bratcher,
General Manager,
Columbine Country Club

PROBLEM

The country club industry has been evolving for many years, but Columbine had yet to make any changes. Prospective members passed on Columbine due to its lack of innovation.

SOLUTION

Fitness is an opportunity for members to cultivate relationships they otherwise wouldn't. High-level fitness is also what the next generation of members expect. To build an operation that is of value and use to all members, 1000 Hills Fitness brought innovative, dynamic staff and programs.

Trend-Driven Fitness

To compete for, and ultimately win, Columbine members' fitness attention, 1000 Hills Fitness identified actionable trends from the commercial and private club fitness industry. The boutique fitness studio business model is thriving. Smaller, more intimate class sizes with an emphasis on fitness experiences are widely appealing, especially to the next generation of private club members. 1000 Hills Fitness' knowledge of private club fitness best practices enabled them to successfully incorporate features from the boutique studio model in a private club setting.

The Club's fitness neighborhood was also analyzed to understand what services and opportunities are available to members outside of the Club. The table on the next page depicts the fitness landscape.

Columbine CC Neighborhood Trends (Data from 1000 Hills)	Commercial Boutique Trends (Data from AFS)	Private Club Trends (Data from CSFA)
Personal training	Personal training	Personal training
Small group personal training	Small group personal training	Small group personal training
Yoga	Functional training	Fitness assessments
High-intensity interval training (HIIT)	High-intensity interval training (HIIT)	Wellness education classes
Nutrition consulting	Yoga	Competitive events for motivating members
Group exercise	Nutrition consulting	Boot camps (HIIT)
Weight loss	Group exercise	Equipment-based private Pilates
Pilates	Sports performance	Equipment-based group Pilates
Group cycling	Pilates	Off-campus events and adventures
Zumba	Youth fitness	Physical therapy programs

Note: Third-party data comes from The Association of Fitness Studios and The Club Spa and Fitness Association.
1000 Hills Fitness collected primary data on the nearby fitness offerings.

Highlighted in blue are the top five trends in Columbine’s neighborhood. 1000 Hills Fitness stressed that Columbine must offer programming comparable to the neighborhood trends or members will be inclined to fulfill their fitness needs elsewhere. Paying for fitness memberships in addition to a Club membership causes members to question the value of membership.

For the first time in history, mobile exercise apps made the American College of Sports Medicine’s Health & Fitness Journal top 20 list (No. 13). This trend is one that private clubs can utilize to increase member engagement. In January 2019, 1000 Hills Fitness helped Columbine Country Club launch a completely customized and white-labeled exercise app. The app includes leaderboards, challenges, and social sharing to fuel friendly competition among members. Fitness pros can project workouts onto projector screens to enhance the live class experience. And members can have their favorite workouts texted directly to their phones for quick access.

The Right People and Processes

A newly renovated facility fit with state-of-the-art equipment is certainly impressive, but it’s the staff and programming that bring the facility to life. For 1000 Hills Fitness to deliver on its promise of making Columbine’s fitness operation best-in-class in its category, the Club needed a top-notch fitness director to coordinate these efforts. 1000 Hills Fitness sought a highly educated, inspired and connected individual. When Jenn Targett took the role, the 1000 Hills Fitness team was there to assist with the transition. 1000 Hills Fitness regularly checks in with Targett and offers resources to help Targett become a pivotal Club manager, leader in the fitness community, and contributor to the national private club fitness conversation.

Because Columbine competes with nearby businesses, it's essential that the fitness operation is built to evolve. To ensure the various needs of fitness savvy members are met, 1000 Hills Fitness selected staff who proactively identify training opportunities and stay current with the latest fitness news. When it comes to program development, the staff embrace failing fast. If after significant trial and error a staff person or program turns out to be a poor fit, staff promptly make adjustments.

1000 Hills Fitness created a platform, which they've dubbed Service-Sales, to educate staff on how to sell fitness in a country club environment. To draw members into the new facility, 1000 Hills Fitness and Targett collaborated on a calendar that includes a thoughtful mix of immersive experiences, premium and specialty classes and packages, destination events and celebrity guests. The calendar is promoted in a weekly newsletter that also shares community happenings, educational articles and announcements. Initially, members were surprised to see so much activity. Many remarked that 1000 Hills Fitness did an excellent job optimizing the staff, space and equipment.

RESULTS

The Club added more than 250 memberships during the building of the fitness center, increased the initiation fee three-fold, and started a membership waitlist!

1000 Hills Fitness knows that the staff's level of engagement directly impacts member experience. In order for members to get the most out of the facility, 1000 Hills Fitness works for each staff person to reach a 9/10 engagement score—1000 Hills Fitness uses an adapted version of the Gallup Q12 Employee Engagement Survey to index engagement. Columbine's fitness director encourages staff, should they feel disengaged, to focus on elements of operation that they can directly improve. Targett has also made it a practice to schedule regular meetings to track staff engagement.

1000 Hills Fitness' goal for program visits to memberships for a brand new fitness center is: 0.5. Fitness staff tracked completed sessions over the course of 2018. A program visit was defined as a "member completing a session with a Club fitness pro." The table below compares 2018 projections for member engagement and actual member engagement.

	2018 Projections	2018 Actual
Program visits (per month)	319	554
Program visits (per month) / Memberships	0.5	1.9
Fitness center visits (per day)	63	41
Fitness center visits (per day) / Memberships	0.1	0.06
Revenue (per year) / Memberships	\$304	\$397
Unique program users (per month)	106	175
Unique program visitors (per month) / Memberships	0.17	0.27

Columbine Country Club outperformed 2018 projections. These numbers demonstrate the value of a partnership with 1000 Hills Fitness. If you ask Michael Bratcher, the Club's former General Manager, what really set Columbine's fitness operation apart was how it "balanced the needs of traditional fitness enthusiasts while incorporating the innovative programming the club craved."

"Columbine Country Club has made a long-term commitment with 1000 Hills Fitness largely because of their insight and personal commitment to creating a truly dynamic new membership amenity."

Michael Bratcher,
General Manager,
Columbine Country Club

CLOSING THOUGHTS

After opening a new fitness facility, there's a tendency to think that research and development is over. As the fitness pros listen to the needs and interests that members express, Targett and 1000 Hills Fitness continue to read industry resources and gain business insights. As 2019 begins, Columbine Country Club's fitness staff plans to keep the operation fresh with newly developed classes and exciting events. Targett and the fitness pros also look forward to how Columbine's fitness app will augment each member's experience and help them accomplish fitness and wellness goals.