

### **DATA IS TRUTH**

COVID created a "dark night of the soul" for the entire industry. We had to ask ourselves questions about our own utility in the big picture and how our businesses are really doing. And we had to ask whether we had the energy to keep going. While almost no one had a perfect score, most microgym owners actually came out of 2020 in better shape.



### BY CHRIS COOPER TWO-BRAIN BUSINESS FOUNDER AND OWNER OF CATALYST FITNESS

For the most part, the microgym industry passed 2020's test. Many of the big-box gyms, franchises and access-only facilities failed.

2020 asked us all the questions we were scared to ask ourselves:

- How fragile is my business?
- How loyal are my customers?
- How useful is my facility?
- How good is my coaching?

COVID created a "dark night of the soul" for the entire industry. We had to ask ourselves questions about our own utility in the big picture and how our businesses are really doing. And we had to ask whether we had the energy to keep going. While almost no one had a perfect score, most microgym owners actually came out of 2020 in better shape.

The COVID Crisis was a catalyst: It sped up the natural evolution of the microgym industry. Gyms with 300 members and poor retention suffered greatly—but that model was on its way out anyway. Gyms with diverse revenue streams, more personal training and nutrition coaching had the best revenue retention in 2020—but they've always had the best revenue. Microgym owners were slowly trending toward 150 members, each paying \$180 or more per month, with a long retention curve—and COVID made it clear who those clients were.

Gyms that fared well through the shutdown actually saw a surge when they reopened. And despite a second shutdown in many parts of the world, microgyms find themselves in a new "blue ocean" of opportunity as the big chains struggle to emerge.

On the next pages, I'm going to share data that supports everything I've just told you—and a lot more. But before I do, I want to talk about numbers and data.

# DATA: COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND SHARING

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

# "MY GOAL WITH THIS REPORT IS TO UNIFY GYMS AROUND SCIENCE INSTEAD OF RELIGION."

If you've ever seen a commercial for a sugary cereal that ends with "part of this balanced breakfast!" then you already know how data works. People can use data and studies to "prove" anything they want—you probably saw a lot of graphs during the pandemic, right? I sure did.

It's taken five years and hundreds of thousands of dollars for us to collect the data we're about to share with you for free. There's never been a larger data-driven study of the fitness industry. We have more data than anyone has ever gathered, and the Two-Brain database grows every single month.

But it's important that I present data in an unbiased way, so we hired an independent analyst with a background in industry intelligence and market research to review the numbers and present his conclusions for this report. This analyst is independently contracted by private equity firms to do due diligence on potential targets, and we asked him to bring the same rigorous standards to the data we gathered.

It's also important for you to understand that we don't try to present a "balanced perspective." The numbers are the numbers, period.

One big failing of the fitness media is its attempt to balance opinion instead of seeking truth. Instead of saying "the average gym owner makes \$X per year," most fitness business websites will profile two gym owners who appear to be successful but might not actually be successful.

Want a great example? During COVID, many "experts" gave advice on how to run Zoom classes. We asked, "Are Zoom classes actually effective at retaining clients?" And it turns out the answer is "no": Gyms running only Zoom classes retained only 7 percent of their clients.

During the COVID Crisis, failure to ask for proof could have been fatal.

On the other hand, in our first Shutdown Guide I recommended that gyms not lend out their equipment. As it turns out, gyms that loaned or rented equipment to their clients had a better retention rate than gyms that didn't. So we updated our recommendations in our second Shutdown Guide, which helped gym owners when lockdowns returned.

I'm driven to collect, analyze and share data because opinion won't save us. Data is truth.

Without a governing agency to collect and share this data, we're not a nation of gyms; we're 20,000 disconnected islands.

My goal with this report is to unify these gyms around science instead of religion.



### MENTORSHIP AND THE CALM MODEL

I learned a lot during the COVID shutdown. The biggest lesson was an early one.

In January, I told the Two-Brain family that 2020 was the "Year of Focus." I told them exactly how to get focus, how to identify their priorities and exactly which steps to take to follow the Two-Brain Model.

When the first gyms closed in China due to COVID, I got really worried. I had a few minutes of self-doubt—that "I can't do it!" moment of panic.

But then I made the mental pivot that saved my gym (and has saved hundreds of others since). I changed my mindset. I didn't say, "Gyms can't survive." I asked, "How can gyms survive a physical lockdown?"

I learned this pivot from years of mentorship.

It's hard to solve a problem when you're in the middle of it. But it's always easy to solve a problem in hindsight. That's because standing inside the problem is overwhelming. So I rely on mentors to give me their perspectives.

Over the last 12 years, I've relied on many mentors to give me that broad, outside perspective. And this year, stuck in the middle of a crisis with thousands of other gym owners around the world, I relied on mentors more than ever before.

I spent over \$230,000 on mentorship this year, and I brought the lessons back to the Two-Brain family. I hired Seth Godin to tell us how to change our stories, Chris Voss to tell us how to negotiate with our landlords, and Risha Grant to tell us how to lead and encourage diversity.

And when things were at their lowest, I turned to my personal mentor, Todd Herman, to help me lead.

The greatest lesson I learned from Todd was the CALM model.

CALM stands for clarity, assurance, leadership and movement.

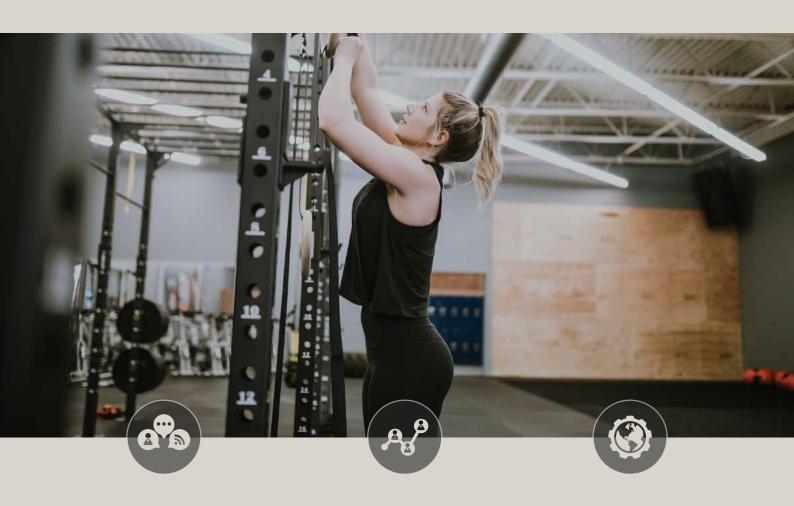
When we're under stress, we naturally look for the leaders who exhibit these characteristics. The purpose of this report is to give you clarity and some assurance. Then it's to highlight the leaders in our midst and use them as a model for recovery and growth. Finally, I want to help you get some movement: I'll tell you how to use the data in this report to grow your gym.

I've broken this report into four parts:

Clarity, Assurance, Leadership and Movement.

### **CLARITY**

### HOW ARE GYMS REALLY DOING?



### **SCOPE**

While previous reports have been helpful in getting a general idea of what's happening in the fitness industry, none were able to provide a holistic view.

### **DATA**

For example, customer relationship management systems have no data on expenses, profit, owner pay and owner lifestyle, and industry associations rely completely on surveys and have no concrete data.

### **VISION**

Our goal in putting this report together is to give you the clearest picture of what is actually happening in the gym industry right now. To do that, we relied on our audience, proprietary tools and industry partners.

### THE DATA

### While creating this report we used data from the following sources:

- A 59-question survey was distributed to our 30,000-person email list and the Gym Owners United Facebook group. For perspective on the events of a challenging year, gym owners filled out this survey from mid-October to mid-November—after the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Expense, profit and owner lifestyle data came from our Two-Brain Business Dashboard. This data is reviewed and verified each month when Two-Brain clients meet with their mentors.
- We compared the revenue, expense, profit and discretionary earning numbers we pulled to data compiled by Incite Tax, one of the largest bookkeeping and accounting firms for small gyms.
- Wodify—one of the largest gym management software providers compiled membership, user, demographic and financial data for thousands of gyms.
- Arbox, a gym management software provider that has a strong presence in international markets, provided similar data. Arbox also provided us with unparalleled insight into what happened during the COVID lockdowns because it tracked membership holds, cancellations and reactivations on a week-by-week and year-over-year basis. Arbox analyzed these numbers and shared its findings openly in the Gym Owners United Facebook group throughout the year.
- Rigquipment provided us with gym owners' financing and payment activities throughout 2020.
- AGuard had a unique view into how many gyms deaffiliated from CrossFit and how many gyms closed their doors entirely.
- Gym Lead Machine gave us website and conversion data so we can better understand a prospect's behavior online.

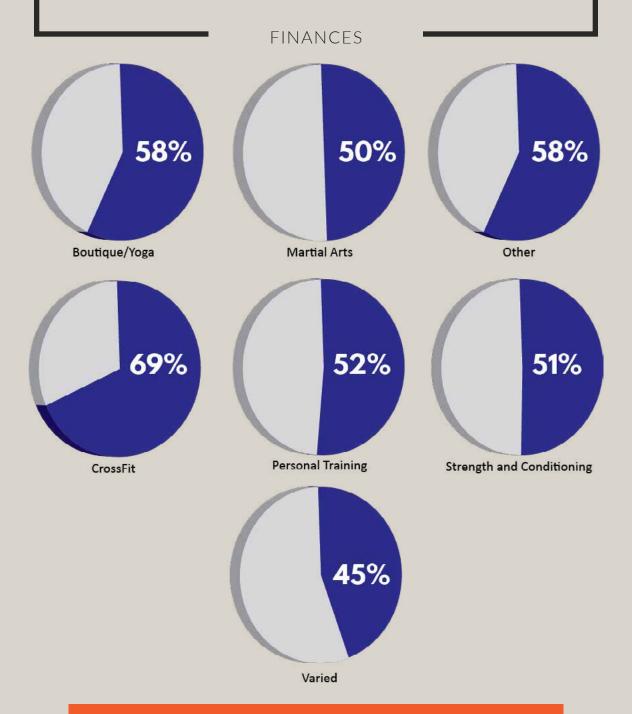
Overall, this report contains information from **over 6,000 gyms.** 

The collection and analysis of this data was a massive but necessary undertaking to provide a comprehensive report on the state of the industry.

### TWO-BRAIN BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONSES



# PERCENTAGE OF PROFITABLE GYMS BY SEGMENT



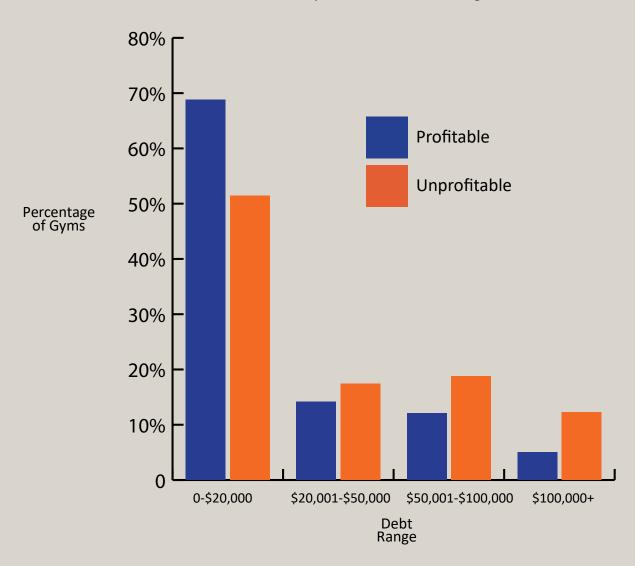
- 64% of respondents report being profitable.
- 69% of CrossFit affiliate owners report being profitable— 10% more than any other segment.

Two notes: The **Other** category includes sports academies, mixed-method boutique gyms with some group classes, bootcamp studios, functional fitness facilities, cycling studios, "health" facilities and so on. The **Varied** category includes gyms that offer a mixture of the main elements of other categories—for example, yoga, CrossFit, martial arts and personal training.



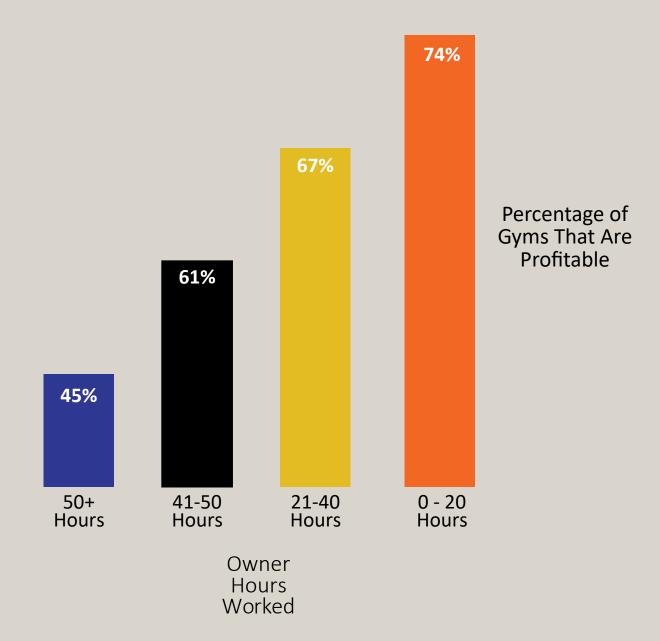
# DEBT RANGE: PROFITABLE AND UNPROFITABLE GYMS

When comparing profitable and unprofitable gyms, profitable gyms are more likely to have less outstanding debt.



### PERCENTAGE OF PROFITABLE GYMS BY OWNER HOURS WORKED

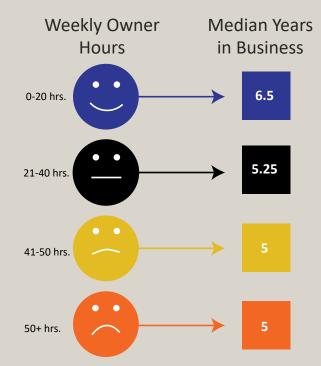
FINANCES



There is a direct correlation between hours worked by owner and profitability—but more is not necessarily better. Seventy-four percent of owners who reported 0-20 hours of work per week ran profitable gyms, while 45 percent of owners who work more than 50 hours run profitable gyms. It's important to note that a host of factors could affect this statistic: For example, new or unprofitable owners might not be able to afford staff people.

# MEDIAN YEARS IN BUSINESS BY OWNER HOURS WORKED

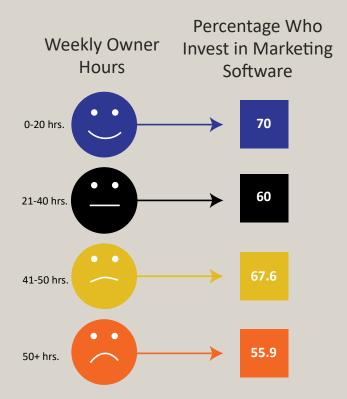
FINANCES



A closer look at the data may suggest that years in business might not be the greatest indicator of business success.

# INVESTMENT IN MARKETING SOFTWARE BY OWNER HOURS WORKED

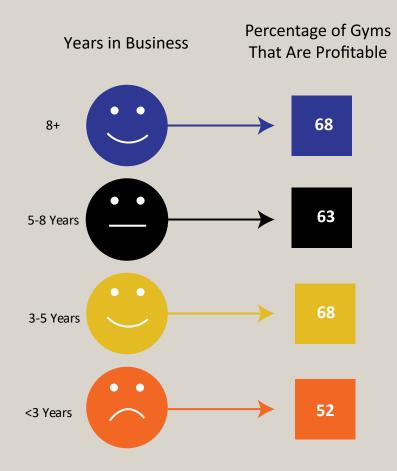
Additional insight: More than half of owners in all categories make this investment. Owners who work 0-20 hours invest at almost the same rate as those who work 41-50 hours, but the latter group does not see similar profitability. It's possible owners who work lower hours invest in marketing software simply because they can afford it.



# PROFITABILITY BY YEARS IN BUSINESS

**FINANCES** 

### PERCENTAGE OF PROFITABLE GYMS BY YEARS IN BUSINESS



As expected, newer gyms have a harder time reaching profitability. There may be signs of a slight decline in the range of five to eight years, when businesses need to avoid losing momentum and ensure they are keeping up with industry trends.

# **MONTHLY EXPENSES**

FINANCES

Median total monthly expenses: \$10,000

Mean total monthly expenses: \$14,169

A quartile chart adds more detail to these numbers: 25 percent of businesses report expenses less than \$6,000 (Quartile 1), 50 percent report expenses less than \$10,000 (Quartile 2), and 75 percent report expenses less than \$18,000 (Quartile 3).

### **BUSINESS EXPENSES BY QUARTILE**



# DOES MONTHLY SPENDING AFFECT PROFITABILITY?

FINANCES

- 53 percent of gyms with monthly expenses less than or equal to \$6,000 are profitable.
- 65 percent of gyms with monthly expenses between \$6,001 and \$10,000 are profitable.
- 64 percent of gyms with expenses between \$10,001 and \$18,000 are profitable.
- 74 percent of gyms with expenses over \$18,000 are profitable.

### As expenses go up, facility size generally increases as well:

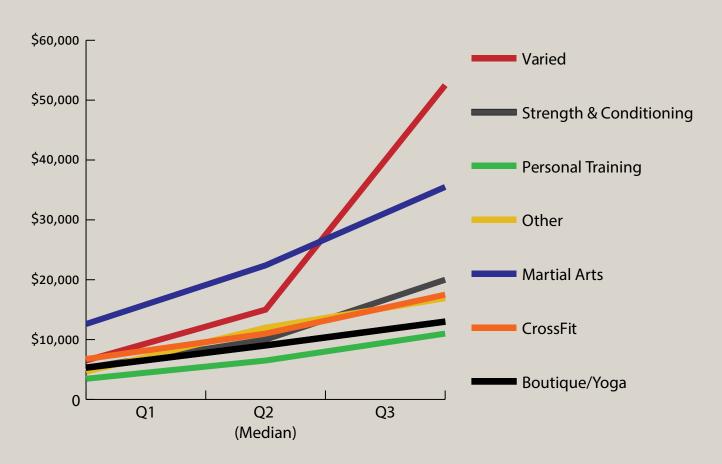
- Gyms with expenses of \$6,000 or less have a median facility size of 2,500 sq. ft.
- Gyms with expenses from \$6,001 to \$10,000 have a median facility size of 4,000 sq. ft.
- Gyms with expenses from \$10,001 to \$18,000 have a median facility size of 4,500 sq. ft.
- Gyms with monthly expenses greater than \$18,000 have a median facility size of 6,800 sq. ft.

Note: The survey revealed that gyms with higher expenses tend to be more profitable. It also revealed that gyms with larger facilities have higher expenses—which is to be expected. But it would be a mistake to review the data above and conclude that larger gyms are always more profitable.

A quartile chart by industry segment adds more detail: In the table on the next page, 25 percent of businesses in each segment report expenses less than the Quartile 1 number, 50 percent report expenses less than the Quartile 2 number, and 75 percent report expenses less than the Quartile 3 number.

# BUSINESS EXPENSES BY QUARTILE FOR INDUSTRY SEGMENTS

FINANCES



Segment	Q1	Q2 (Median)	Q3
Boutique/Yoga	\$5,313	\$9,025	\$13,000
CrossFit	\$6,750	\$11,000	\$17,500
Martial Arts	\$12,625	\$22,350	\$35,525
Other	\$4,625	\$12,000	\$16,875
Personal Training	\$3,450	\$6,500	\$11,000
Strength & Cond.	\$5,295	\$10,000	\$20,000
Varied	\$6,500	\$15,000	\$52,500

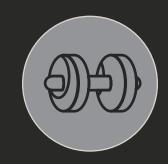


### **HOURS PER WEEK**

**OWNER INSIGHTS** 



AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK:



### LOW END:

CrossFit gym owners (34 hours)

### **HIGH END:**

S&C owners (46 hours) and Boutique/Yoga owners (44 hours)

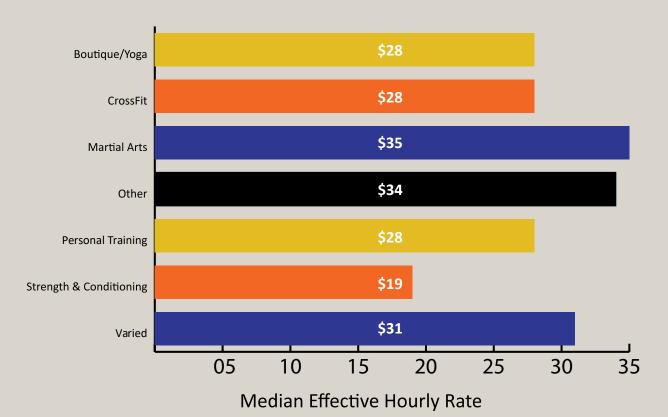


## EFFECTIVE HOURLY RATE

Effective hourly rate (EHR) is pay divided by hours: \$ / Time = EHR

MEDIAN EHR (ALL SEGMENTS): \$26

### MEDIAN EFFECTIVE HOURLY RATE BY SEGMENT



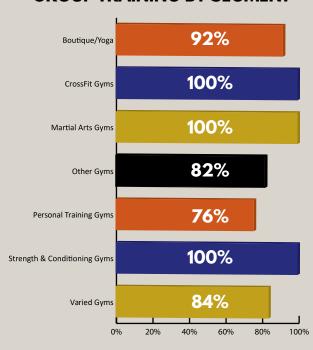
# REVENUE MODEL

### GROUP TRAINING

REVENUE MODEL

### 96 PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS OFFER GROUP TRAINING.

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS OFFERING GROUP TRAINING BY SEGMENT



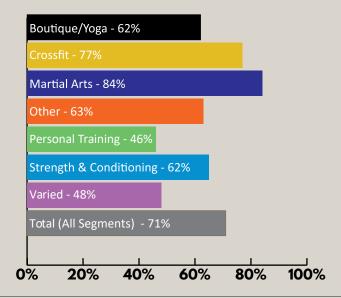
MEDIAN COST FOR UNLIMITED GROUP MEMBERSHIP (ALL CATEGORIES): \$155

MEDIAN COST FOR UNLIMITED CROSSFIT GROUP MEMBERSHIP: \$155

HIGHEST MEDIAN: BOUTIQUE/YOGA (\$197) LOWEST MEDIAN: VARIED GYMS (\$130)

### **AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE FROM GROUP TRAINING**

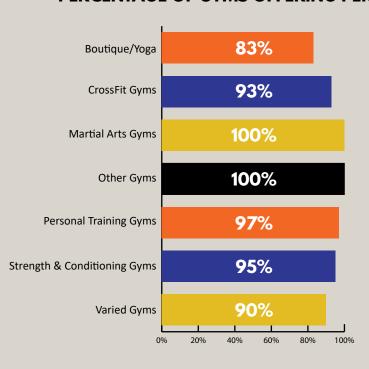
Note: This data is the average for businesses that offer group training services, not for the segment in total. Some businesses do not offer group training and were not included in these stats.



### PERSONAL TRAINING

REVENUE MODEL

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS OFFERING PERSONAL TRAINING BY SEGMENT



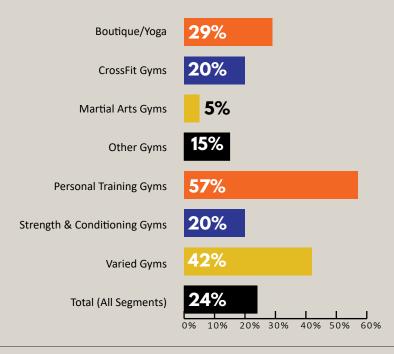
Over 90 percent of businesses in each segment except one—
Boutique/Yoga, 83 percent—report offering this service. Of note, Cross-Fit affiliates are often regarded as "group training facilities," but 93 percent of those surveyed offer personal training as well.

Across all segments, the range of prices for a 60-minute personal session was small, and the mean and median numbers are almost exactly the same.

### AVERAGE PRICE OF 60-MINUTE PT SESSION ACROSS ALL SEGMENTS: \$72

### **AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE FROM PERSONAL TRAINING**

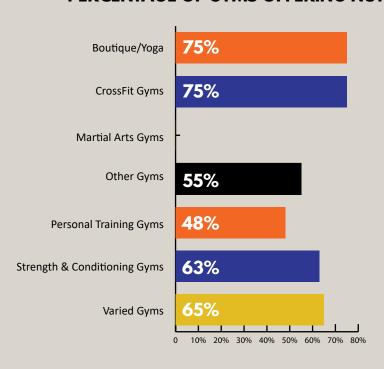
Note: This data is the average for businesses that offer personal training services, not for the segment in total. Some businesses do not offer personal training and were not included in these stats. Martial Arts gyms had the lowest numbers, but this segment had the fewest respondents.



# NUTRITION COACHING

REVENUE MODEL

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS OFFERING NUTRITION COACHING BY SEGMENT



### 69 percent of respondents offer nutrition coaching.

Nutrition coaching is most common in CrossFit gyms and Boutique/Yoga gyms (75 percent for both segments).

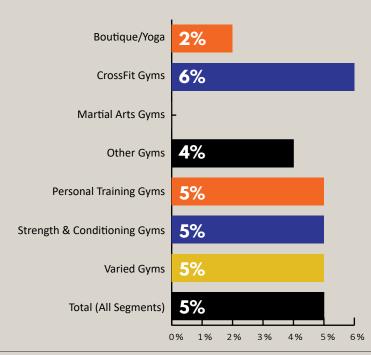
Of note, only 48 percent of Personal Training gyms offer nutrition coaching, and many of the Personal Training gyms that reported offering nutrition coaching said the cost of this coaching is \$0. The Martial Arts figure—zero—might reflect the small sample size.

HIGHEST MEDIANS: OTHER AND CROSSFIT (\$122 AND \$120, RESPECTIVELY)

### MEDIAN PRICE FOR NUTRITION COACHING ACROSS ALL SEGMENTS: \$110

### **AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE FROM NUTRITION COACHING**

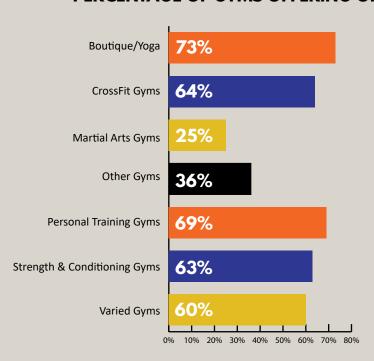
Nutrition coaching does not make up a significant portion of overall revenue in any segment. This is an area of opportunity: Nutrition services scale fast and can be delivered online or in person. Two-Brain Coaching offers a credential that will allow a nutrition coach to get up and running in 30 days or less.



# ONLINE COACHING

REVENUE MODEL

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS OFFERING ONLINE TRAINING BY SEGMENT

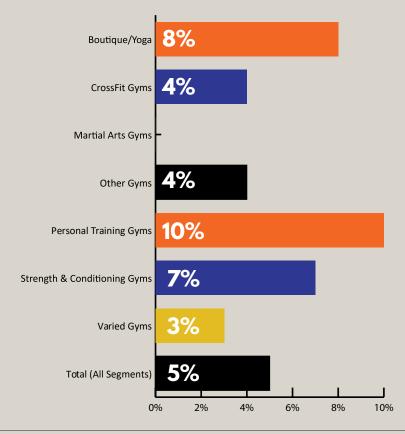


### 63% of businesses offer online coaching.

Note: Online coaching may overlap with other areas of business—online group training, online personal training, online nutrition coaching.

Additional note: The survey data was collected in fall 2020, well after the COVID-related shutdowns of spring but before the second wave of shutdowns that occurred in mid- and late November in some areas.

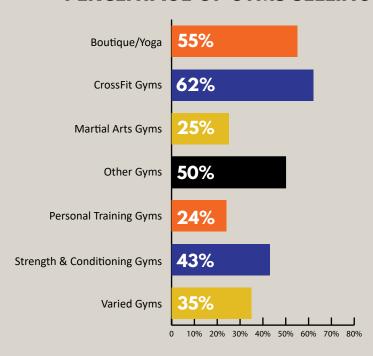
### **AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF REVENUE FROM ONLINE COACHING**



### **SUPPLEMENTS**

REVENUE MODEL

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS SELLING SUPPLEMENTS BY SEGMENT



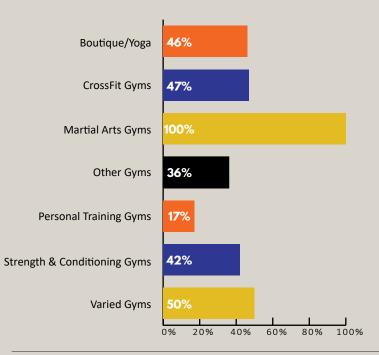
54 PERCENT OF BUSINESSES REPORT SELLING SUPPLEMENTS.

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE
OF REVENUE FROM
SUPPLEMENTS AND RETAIL:
3

### KIDS CLASSES

REVENUE MODEL

### PERCENTAGE OF GYMS OFFERING KIDS CLASSES BY SEGMENT



44 PERCENT OF BUSINESSES OFFER KIDS CLASSES

# REVENUE STRUCTURE BY OWNER-ESTIMATED VALUE

### REVENUE MODEL

The table below looks at the average revenue representation with relation to the owner's estimated business value. The percentages below are averages of self-reported numbers and may not equal 100.

Note: Online coaching revenue might overlap other segments of businesses.

Key: GT (group training), PT (personal training), NC (nutrition coaching), S&R (supplements and retail), OC (online coaching).

### REVENUE BREAKDOWN BY OWNER-ESTIMATED VALUE

Owner-Estimated Value	GT%	PT%	NC%	S&R%	OC%
\$0-\$60,000	71.4	18.3	3.4	2.1	2
\$60,001-\$122,500	69.3	15.2	3.6	2	2.8
\$122,501-\$250,000	67.3	19.2	4.5	2.7	2.7
\$250,000+	62	18.6	3.7	1.8	2.1



### ONLINE ADVERTISING

### MARKETING

The table below looks at the online advertising output of respondents by segment, including the decline from the high point (Have Run Ads) to the current numbers. Most segments show large declines, indicating that significantly fewer businesses were running ads at the time owners filled out the survey.

### PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ADVERTISING RATES BY SEGMENT

Segment	Have Run Ads %	Current Ads %	+/-%
Boutique/Yoga	91	82	-10
CrossFit	80	43	-46
Martial Arts	100	50	-50
Other	82	18	-78
Personal Training	72	35	-51
Strength & Conditioning	73	20	-73
Varied	85	50	-41
Total (All Segments)	80	41	-49

61.6 PERCENT OF BUSINESSES
THAT DO NOT CURRENTLY RUN
ADS ARE PROFITABLE

66 PERCENT OF BUSINESSES
THAT CURRENTLY RUN ADS
ARE PROFITABLE

### REASONS FOR NO LONGER RUNNING ADS

Reason	%
Unsuccessful—Poor ROI, Bad Leads	30.8
Success With Other Methods—Lack of Need	21.4
COVID-19-Related Decline	12.4
Lack of Know-How	10.9
At Capacity—No Room for New Members	6.0
Lack of Budget	6.0
Other Reasons	4.5
Unsure	4.5
Use Campaigns	3.5

The most common reason for no longer running ads: unsuccessful efforts, lack of return on investment or not producing quality leads (31 percent of responses). Other reasons: a focus on retention,

Many businesses have stopped running ads due to success with other methods:

increased work on operations, etc.

specifically, Affinity Marketing and word of mouth. This is in line with Two-Brain principles: use Affinity Marketing before paid advertising. Some gyms that do this—including Chris Cooper's—do not need to run ads.

# WORK WITH MARKETING AGENCIES

MARKETING

38 PERCENT OF
BUSINESSES HAVE
WORKED WITH
MARKETING AGENCIES

ONLY 14 PERCENT CURRENTLY WORK WITH MARKETING AGENCIES (63 PERCENT DECLINE) 59 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED WITH AN AGENCY HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE

### REASONS FOR BAD EXPERIENCES WITH MARKETING AGENCIES

Reason	%
Bad ROI, Didn't Meet Expectations or Deliver on Promises	56
Agency Was Not Skilled	17
Unethical Practices	10
Bad/Undesirable Leads	7
Lack of Support	5
Other Reasons	4

Notes: In the adjacent table, "Unethical Practices" accounts for reported situations such as provision of fake leads, click-through-rate boosting and overcharging. "Other Reasons" accounts for situations such as deals falling through and trial periods.

### MARKETING SOFTWARE

### MARKETING SOFTWARE SPENDING

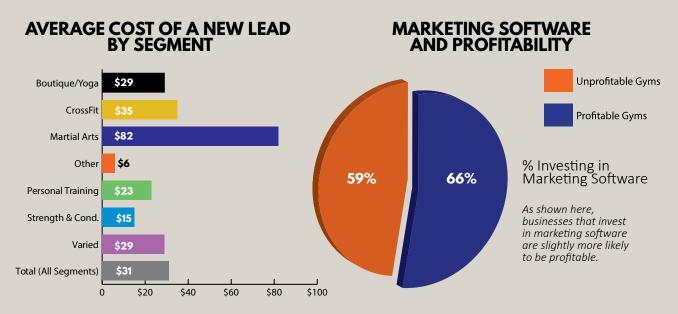
A quantile presentation that isolates those who spend on marketing software adds more detail:

Туре	Q1	Q2 (Median)	Q3
Only Investors	\$100	\$213	\$300
All Companies	\$0	\$100	\$300

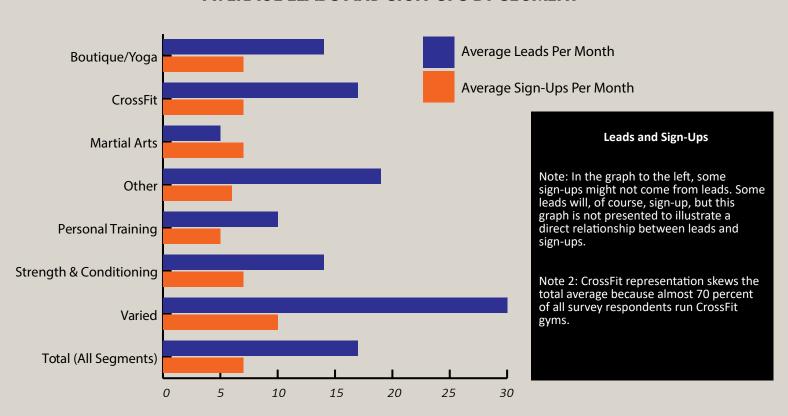
64 PERCENT USE
MARKETING SOFTWARE
(EMAIL AND TEXT
AUTOMATION, FUNNEL
BUILDERS, ETC.)

SPEND: \$229





### **AVERAGE LEADS AND SIGN-UPS BY SEGMENT**

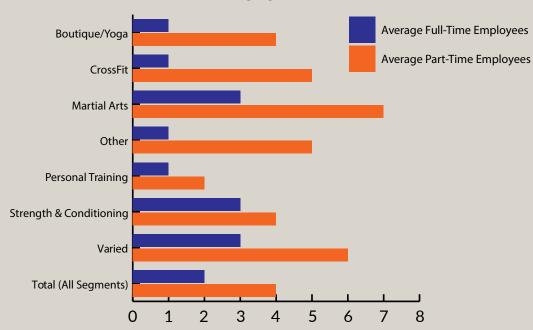




### **STAFF**

STAFF

### AVERAGE FULL- AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES BY SEGMENT



Note: Stats in the graph above were rounded to the nearest whole numbers.

Part-time employees are more common in all segments.

### **AVERAGE BREAKDOWN OF STAFF BY GYM SIZE**

	0-2,500 sq. ft.	2,501- 4,000 sq. ft.	4,001- 6,200 sq. ft.	6,200+ sq. ft.
Median FT employees	0	1	1	2
Mean FT employees	0.8	1.8	1	2.9
Median PT employees	2	4	4	6
Mean PT employees	2.8	3.9	4.3	6.7
Median highest- earning staff member	\$12,000	\$20,000	\$25,000	\$40,000
Contractor model	50.6%	48.2%	39.8%	31.8%
Employee model	33.3%	28.2%	40.9%	47.7%
Both contractors and employees	16.1%	23.5%	19.3%	20.5%

### COACH CLASSIFICATION STRATEGY BY SEGMENT

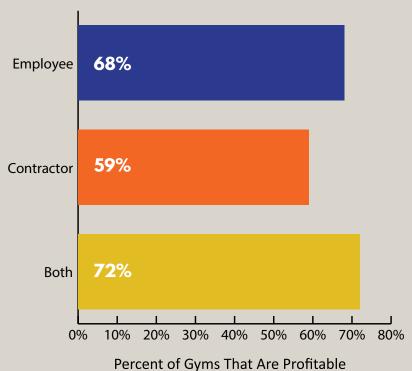
Segment	Employee	Contractor	Both
Boutique/ Yoga	20%	50%	30%
CrossFit	39%	42%	19%
Martial Arts	0%	33%	67%
Other	33%	44%	22%
Personal Training	50%	45%	5%
Strength & Cond.	33%	40%	28%
Varied	41%	35%	24%
Total (All Segments)	38%	42%	20%

In terms of coach classification, gyms that implement a dual model are the most likely to be profitable. Gyms that implement a contractors-only model are less likely to be profitable—but this fact might not be representative of the model; i.e., smaller gyms just might not be able to afford to put anyone on payroll.

### **STAFF**

STAFF

### PROFITABLE BUSINESS CLASSIFICATION STRATEGY



### **COACH COMPENSATION**

AVERAGE COACH
COMPENSATION PER
CLASS (ALL SEGMENTS):
\$22

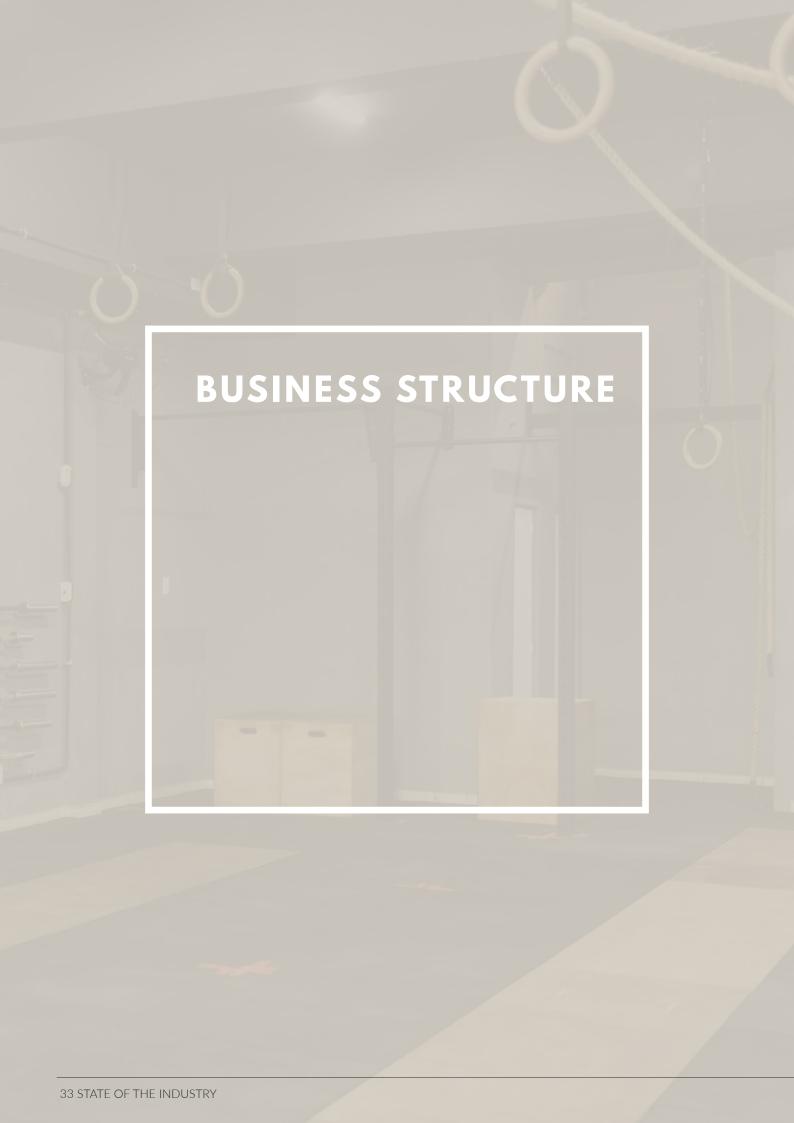
LOWEST SEGMENTS: \$21
(CROSSFIT, OTHER)

**\$27**(MARTIAL ARTS)

Note: CrossFit gyms represent nearly 70 percent of survey responses, so their median is the closest to the total median in the table below.

### **MEDIAN AND MEAN HIGHEST SALARIES BY SEGMENT**

Segment	Median Highest Salary	Mean Highest Salary
Boutique/Yoga	\$20,000	\$16,950
CrossFit	\$24,000	\$25,913
Martial Arts	\$41,000	\$35,333
Other	\$30,000	\$26,044
Personal Training	\$30,000	\$36,075
Strength & Cond.	\$12,000	\$19,571
Varied	\$36,000	\$33,747
Total (All Segments)	\$24,000	\$26,153



### **BUSINESS PARTNERS**

BUSINESS STRUCTURE •

Data revealed businesses with partners are neither more nor less likely to be profitable.

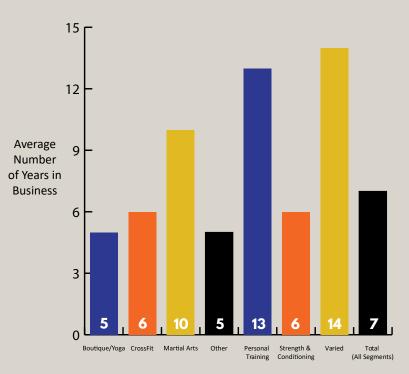
34 PERCENT OF BUSINESS OWNERS HAVE A PARTNER

37 PERCENT OF CROSSFIT GYM OWNERS HAVE A PARTNER

### **YEARS IN BUSINESS**

BUSINESS STRUCTURE

### AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS IN BUSINESS BY SEGMENT



Cost to Open: Half of CrossFit gyms cost less than \$35,000 to open

### MEDIAN AND MEAN COSTS TO OPEN BY SEGMENT

Segment	Median Cost to Open	Mean Cost to Open
Boutique/Yoga	\$42,500	\$53,410
CrossFit	\$35,000	\$54,666
Martial Arts	\$157,000	\$185,666
Other	\$62,500	\$71,400
Personal Training	\$25,000	\$54,353
Strength & Cond.	\$32,500	\$81,278
Varied	\$45,000	\$187,128
Total (All Segments)	\$35,000	\$65,843

### **ESTIMATED BUSINESS VALUE**

(PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO GUESSED)

BUSINESS STRUCTURE

Many survey respondents did not venture to guess what their businesses were worth, choosing instead to enter answers such as "not sure" or "not much."

### OWNER-ESTIMATED VALUE AND AVERAGE YEARS IN BUSINESS

Owner-Estimated Value	Percentage of Respondents	Avg. Years in Business
\$0-\$60,000	26.1	4
\$60,001-\$122,500	23.7	5
\$122,501-\$250,000	27.2	7
\$250,000+	23	8

Gym owners who estimated the value of their businesses in the range of \$122,501-\$250,000 are most willing to sell. These gyms are also the most likely to be profitable.

Gym owners on the lower end of the spectrum might be unwilling to sell due to business value or business debt.

### WILLINGNESS TO SELL BY OWNER-ESTIMATED VALUE AND PROFITABILITY

Owner-Estimated Value	Yes	Maybe	No	Prof. %
\$0-\$60,000	16.2%	25.7%	58.1%	36.5
\$60,000-\$122,500	17.9%	25.4%	56.7%	64.2
\$122,501-\$250,000	31.6%	31.6%	36.8%	78.9
\$250,000+	24.6%	26.2%	49.2%	76.9



# COVID-19

FACING A CRISIS



AVERAGE LENGTH OF GYM SHUTDOWN

91 DAYS



OF RESPONDENTS
SAW COMPETITORS
GO OUT OF
BUSINESS

### **PAY CUTS**

- Overall, 57 percent of owners report taking a pay cut
- Owners of profitable businesses were less likely to take a pay cut (48 percent)

### **MOST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Strength and Conditioning (76 percent)

### **LEAST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Other (20 percent)

### **CROSSFIT:**

54 percent

### **FINANCING**

44 percent of owners took out a loan

### **MOST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Martial Arts (75 percent)

### **LEAST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Personal Training (32 percent)

### **CROSSFIT:**

43 percent

### STAFF ADJUSTMENTS

18 percent of owners had to fire staff

### **MOST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Martial Arts (50 percent)

### **LEAST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Other (0 percent)

### **CROSSFIT:**

18 percent

### **FINANCING**

35 percent of owners used personal funds to support their business

### **MOST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Martial Arts (75 percent)

### **LEAST AFFECTED SEGMENT:**

Other (18 percent)

### **CROSSFIT:**

29 percent

# COVID-19

FACING A CRISIS

### **COVID HIT BY EFFECTIVE HOURLY RATE**

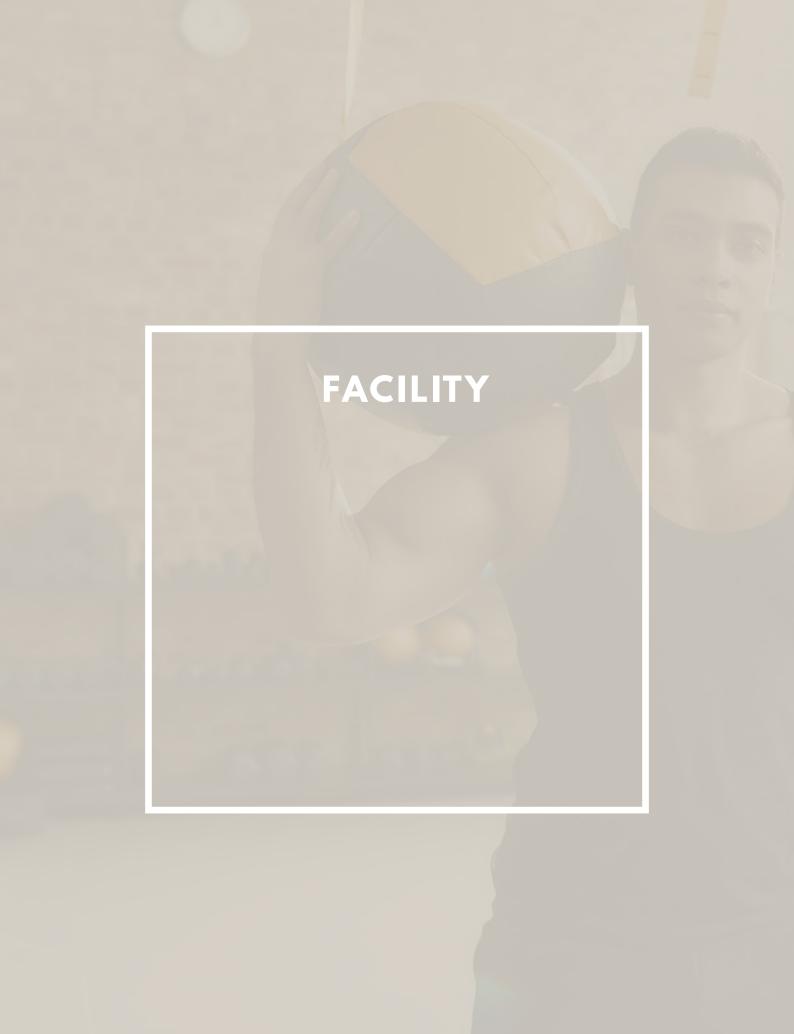
Effective Hourly Rate	Fire Staff %	Take Loan	Pers. Fund %	Pay Cut
\$0-\$12	11.6	37.9	59.6	68.1
\$13-\$26	15.1	48.8	32.9	69
\$27-\$50	25.8	45.4	27.8	51
\$50+	14.8	45.7	18.5	38.3

### **COVID HIT BY PART-TIME EMPLOYEES**

Part-Time Employees	Fire Staff %	Take Loan %	Pers. Fund %	Pay Cut %
0-2	15	29.2	46.4	65.1
3-4	18.6	55.7	21.6	47.4
5-6	14.3	48.8	33.3	58.3
7+	21.1	50.7	33.8	54.9

The table above reveals that gyms with more staff people tend to prefer loans over personal funding.





# PROFITABILITY & OWNERSHIP

**FACILITY** 

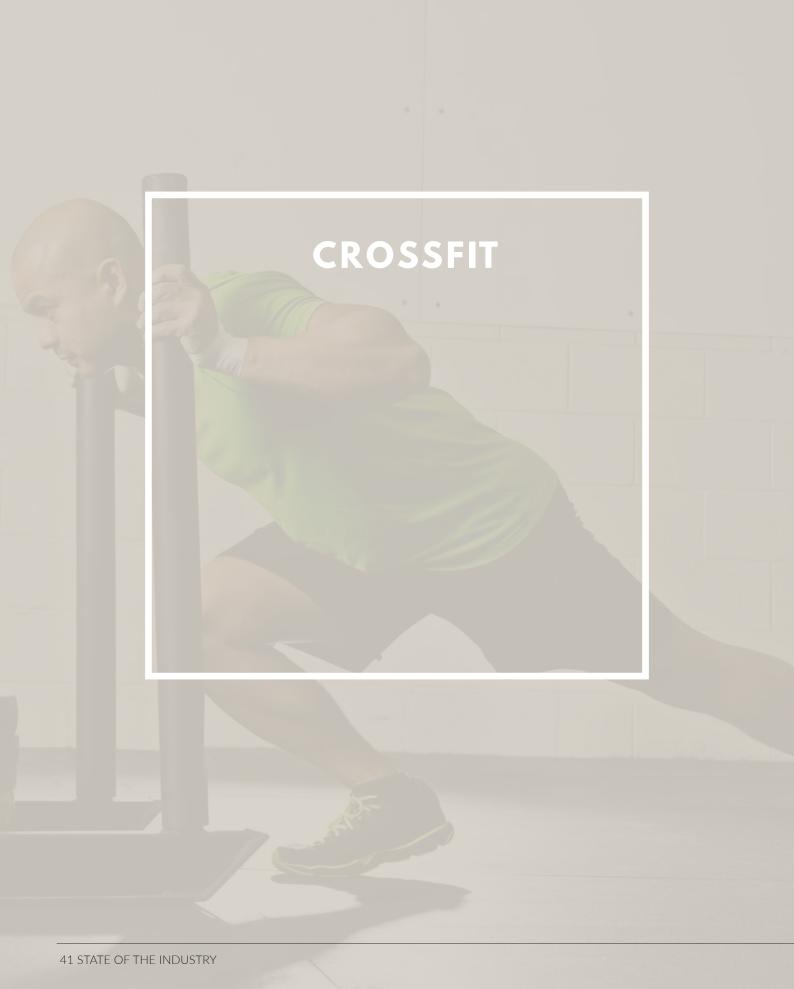
Of the gyms owners who responded, those with 6,200 or more sq. ft. of space are most likely to be profitable.

Gym owners operating in more than 6,200 sq. ft. are most likely to own their buildings.

### PROFITABILITY AND OWNERSHIP BY GYM SIZE

Size in Sq. Ft.	Prof. %	Own %
0-2,500	44.6	8.9
2,501-4,000	70.6	5.9
4,001-6,200	66.3	4.4
6,200+	74.7	13.2





# **CROSSFIT**

Nearly 17 percent of CrossFit-related businesses in our survey have deaffiliated since the beginning of 2020, but 90.4 percent of owners who reported participating in the CrossFit Games Open last year say they will participate in 2021. Just over 18.5 percent of businesses that did not participate in the last Open plan to participate in 2021.

Owners of companies that are profitable are more likely to be confident in the future of the CrossFit brand:

69.4 percent of owners of profitable businesses are confident in the brand versus only

53.1 percent of unprofitable owners.



82%
OF BUSINESS
OWNERS ARE
CONFIDENT IN THE
FUTURE OF THE
BRAND



10.2%

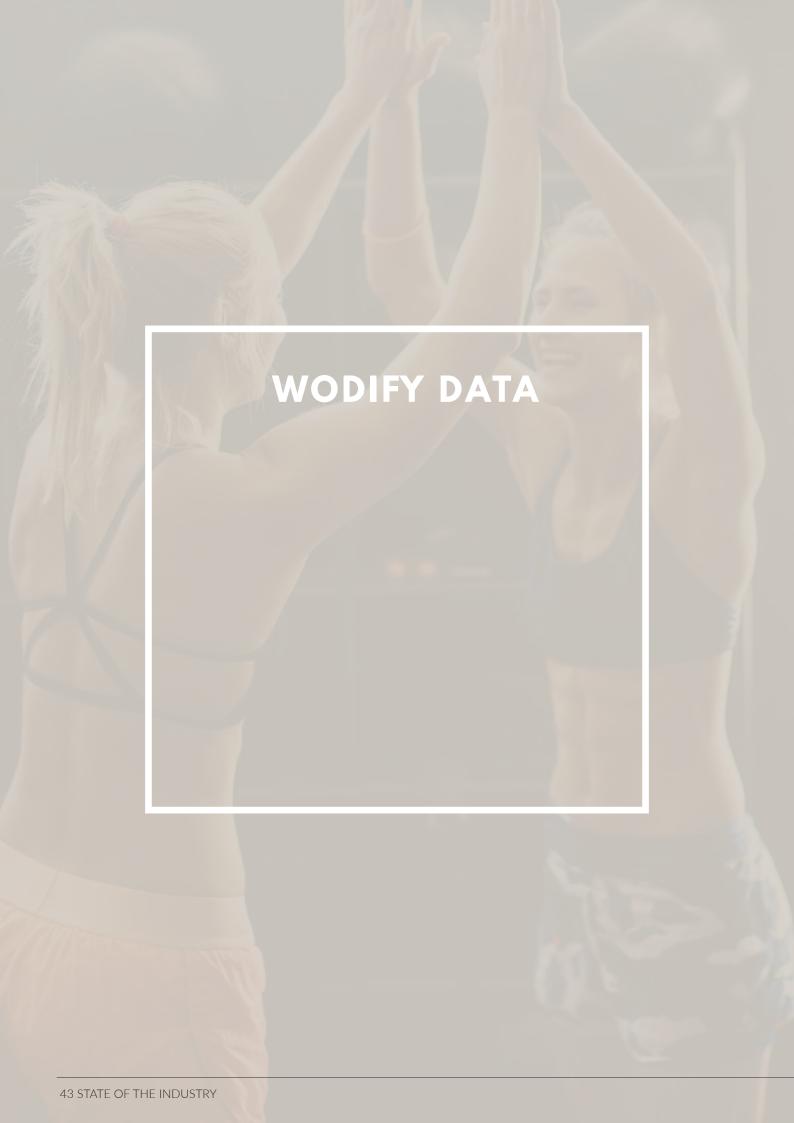
ARE NOT.

(6.1 PERCENT

UNSURE AND

1.6 PERCENT

INDIFFERENT)



# MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

WODIFY DATA

### **BREAKDOWN OF ACTIVE CLIENTS BY AGE AND GENDER**

Gender	Age	Percentage (%)
Male	Below 21	6.81
Female	Below 21	5.45
Male	21 to 30	11.08
Female	21 to 30	12.22
Male	31 to 40	18.58
Female	31 to 40	18.41
Male	41 to 50	9.57
Female	41 to 50	9.13
Male	50 or above	4.23
Female	50 or above	4.51

# **CLASSES**

WODIFY DATA

Class sizes trended smaller: Major class losses in the range of 16-20 and 21-25 athletes were seen, with related increases for classes with limits of 5-10 and 11-15. This change is likely due to capacity restrictions imposed by local governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.





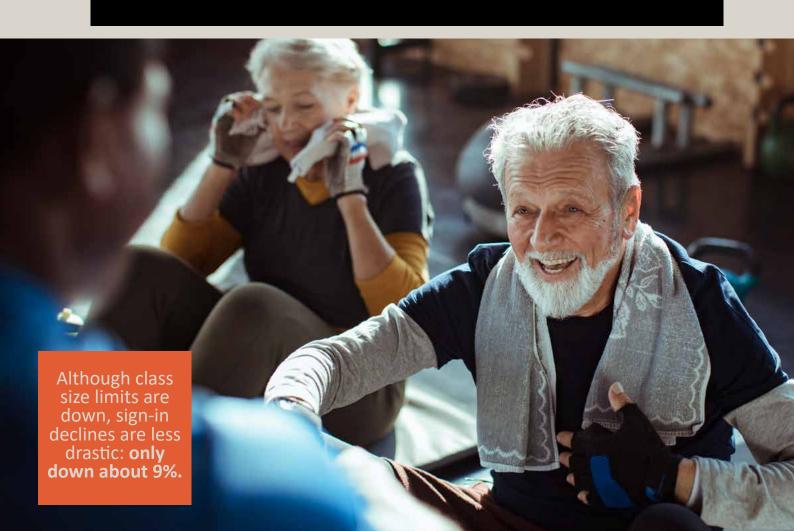
### AVERAGE CLASS SIZE BY CLASS LIMIT RANGE— PRE- AND POST-COVID

Class Limit Range	Percent Change	Pre-COVID Rep. %	Post-COVID Rep. %	Simple Percentage Point +/-
1-4	130	1.14	2.16	1.01
5-10	248	9.99	28.49	18.5
11-15	42	36.33	42.17	5.84
16-20	-34	32.86	17.65	-15.21
21-25	-48	11.02	4.65	-6.36
26-30	-25	4.73	2.91	-1.82
31 - 35	-67	1.26	0.34	-0.91
36-40	31	0.61	0.66	0.05
41+	-43	2.06	0.97	-1.09

Percent Change = Percentage increase or decrease in locations that fit in each range.

Pre- & Post-COVID Rep. % = Representation in total locations by each class limit range.

Simple Percentage Point +/- = Simple percentage point increase; an increase from 10 to 20% would be a 10-point increase.



# CLASSES PER WEEK

WODIFY DATA

Businesses seemed to offer more classes per week after COVID hit. Locations with 0-9 classes per week showed the largest percentage point decrease, but locations with 70+ classes per week increased to represent nearly 11 percent of all locations. In terms of classes per week, 20-29 and 30-39 remain the most common, although representation across all locations did not change much for these two categories.

# AVERAGE CLASSES PER WEEK —PRE- AND POST-COVID

Class Per Week Range.	Percent Change	Pre-COVID Rep. %	Post-COV- ID Rep. %	Simple Percentage Point +/-
0-9	-36	17.34	9.62	-7.72
10-19	8	11.56	10.77	-0.79
20-29	22	21.78	22.94	1.15
30-39	20	21.05	21.84	0.79
40-49	9	12.96	12.22	-0.73
50-59	39	6.51	7.81	1.3
60-69	34	3.65	4.22	0.57
70+	138	5.14	10.58	5.43

Percent Change = Percentage increase or decrease in locations that fit in each range. Pre- & Post-COVID Rep. % = Representation in total locations by each class limit range. Simple Percentage Point +/- = Simple percentage point increase; an increase from 10 to 20% would be a 10-point increase.

Data shows that most people are offering more classes with **smaller capacities.** This leads us to believe that the average gym owner has higher costs and is earning less for each class offered. This combination is akin to burning the candle at both ends and is likely eating into profit margins.

The average gym owner offering 30 classes a week makes about \$96.58 in revenue for each class offered. When we compare this to the profitability data provided by Incite Tax, the average gym owner earns about \$13.72 of profit per class—though the true number is likely lower because this number includes gym owners who work in the business but only pay themselves via distributions.

# **PROGRAMS**

WODIFY DATA

The average gym offers 5.19 programs.

Programs are unique class offerings such as CrossFit, bootcamp, yoga, etc.

# **STAFF**

The average gym has
7.32 people who
manage settings
in Wodify.
This number likely includes
administrators, coaches,
desk staff, etc.

# PROGRAMS OFFERED BY PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUSINESSES

Unique Programs	%
1-3	40.35
4-6	32.23
7-9	16.05
10-12	6.45
13-15	2.76
15-18	1.25
19-21	0.39
22-24	0.16
25+	0.36
Total	100

# **LEG**

# Average LEG: \***755.13 days**—about two years.

\*This figure was calculated using the length of engagement for current athletes and is therefore selecting athletes who have been around longer. Current Two-Brain Business research shows that the average gym member stays for around seven months.

### AVERAGE LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP BY PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUSINESSES

Days	%
0-149	7.68
150-299	8.77
300-449	10.45
450-599	13.22
600-749	15.16
750-899	14.05
900-1,049	11.11
1,050-1,199	6.54
1,200-1,349	3.81
1,350+	9.22

# **ARM & LEG**

### WODIFY DATA

A separate analysis done by Wodify concluded that approximately **50 percent of all athletes** who sign up leave within three months.

Retention is traction. The reason most gyms can't grow beyond 50, 70 or 100 clients isn't usually marketing: It's that they can't keep the clients they get. Every time you lose a client, you lose the client's spouse, kids and coworkers, too. And the faster you lose clients, the less likely they are to come back.

With a high turnover rate, gym owners have to spend all their time marketing to replace the clients they lose. That creates a hamster-wheel effect of marketing and sales—and it's usually a downward spiral.

Profitable gyms have great retention, period. The average gym owner can easily add up to \$40,000 per year in profit just by keeping clients for two months longer!

Most importantly, three months aren't enough to change a client's life. Our business is coaching. And our value is determined by the results we get for our clients. The key to long-term results is in finding ways to get a client to stick with a program long term, not in correcting every movement "fault" a client makes in class.

By now, every gym should have a clear onboarding program to prepare clients for the next step (like on-ramp); a Prescriptive Model to consult with new clients, review the progress of existing clients, and change client paths as needed; and staff dedicated to keeping clients on track. For example, a gym charging \$150 per month (the high end for a non-Two-Brain gym or the low end for a Two-Brain gym) with 150 clients could make an extra \$38,000 per year in profit just by keeping those clients for two extra months. And think about how much clients can improve their fitness in two months!

# AVERAGE REVENUE PER MEMBER PER MONTH BY PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL BUSINESSES

ARM	%
0-50	14.24
50-100	47.98
100-150	29.68
150-200	6.14
200-250	1.05
250-300	0.49
300-350	0.15
350+	0.26

77.7 %
of gyms have an ARM between \$50 and \$150

# **GYM REVENUE**

WODIFY DATA

# **GYM REVENUE**

The average revenue for a gym in the third quarter of 2020 was down

15.5% from the previous year.

As expected, average revenue dropped drastically at the beginning of the second quarter. Revenues improved after that, but they had yet to reach pre-pandemic levels at the time these reports were run.

On a more granular level, January 2020 was the highest-grossing month for gyms over the last five quarters, while April 2020 was the lowest-grossing month.

### The average gym lost 39 percent of its revenue from January to April.

Revenue was stable from June through October. At the time of reporting, revenues were up 20.5 percent from the April low but still down 26.5 percent from the January high.





# **INCITE TAX**

SNAPSHOT

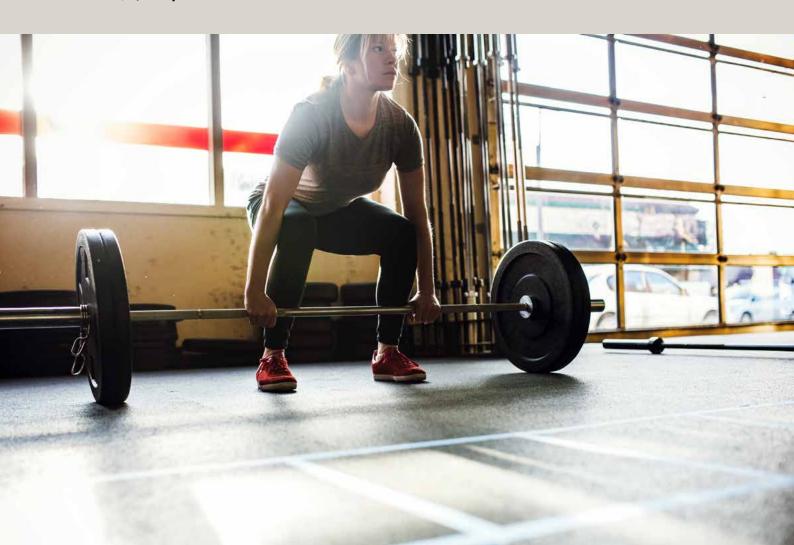
**During COVID, 68 percent of gyms were able to secure a PPP loan**. For many, this was probably the difference between failure and survival.

Unfortunately, 42 percent of the gyms that went from profitable to unprofitable during the COVID shutdown haven't yet recovered their profitability. And that profitability is tied to total revenue: Median revenue is the same for both gyms in the top 30 percent and the top 10 percent.

While more revenue doesn't always mean more profit, right now it does. This tells us two things:

- Gyms are running as lean as they can.
- The gyms that kept selling memberships, personal training, nutrition coaching or anything else online maintained their profitability or recovered it quickly after being shut down.

The dark side: The bottom 30 percent of gyms reported losing an average of \$1,753 per month.





# **GYM LEAD MACHINE DATA**

MARKETING STATS



GYM OWNER
REPORTED
EIGHT NEW
MEMBERS A
MONTH.



THE AVERAGE GYM
IS BOOKING
67 PERCENT
OF ALL WEBSITE
LEADS FOR A FREE
INTRO.



THE AVERAGE GYM
IS CLOSING 63
PERCENT OF LEADS
WHO BOOK A FREE
INTRO.

### **WEBSITE STATS**

- The average gym website gets 500 new visitors and 92 returning visitors each month.
- Traffic is down 13 percent from its pre-COVID average.
- May was the worst month for gym website traffic.
- At the time of reporting in fall 2020, average traffic was up 19 percent from COVID lows.
- The average new visitor looks at two pages of a site, so gym owners must make the most of each page and eliminate unnecessary pages that don't add value.
- 71 percent of traffic is coming from mobile phones and tablets. Gyms must have a website that is mobile- and tablet-friendly.

# ARBOX DATA

### **ARBOX DATA**

SNAPSHOT

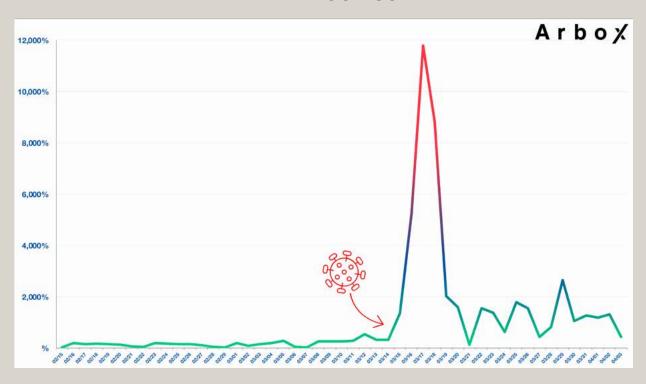
Arbox's data reveals how much the COVID Crisis affected the fitness industry. Here's how bad it got:

- 1. From March to April alone, Arbox reported a **26.4 percent total revenue drop** for its clients.
- 2. In the same period, **5.5 percent of all gym members** in the system cancelled their memberships outright, and many others placed their memberships on hold.
- 3. Then it got worse: **Membership cancellations increased four times from April to May.**
- 4. Membership cancellations normalized in fall to move in line with pre-COVID levels, but unfortunately new membership sign-ups were still **down roughly 8.5 percent** from pre-COVID levels.

In a study published with Deloitte Catalyst, Arbox reported that usage of Israeli gyms' online offerings went from 2 percent pre-COVID to 38 percent during the first COVID shutdown to 15 percent after the first shutdown.

In the second half of March and in April, contract values of new subscriptions and renewals fell in Israel by 90-95 percent. Further: 5 percent of all fitness businesses closed permanently. Businesses that sold fitness equipment experienced an increase in sales as people moved to training at home.

# ARBOX: HOLD PERCENTAGE GROWTH PRE- AND POST-COVID





# **AGUARD DATA**

SNAPSHOT



AGuard reported that 5.5 percent of CrossFit gyms went out of business during the lockdown period from mid-March to July.



In September, Yelp reported that 2,600 U.S. fitness businesses had closed since March—about 6.5 percent of all U.S. gyms.

(Source: Yelp Local Economic

Impact Report, Sept. 2020)



AGuard's figure indicates microgyms might be more resilient than the broader industry.





# **RIGQUIPMENT DATA**

SNAPSHOT

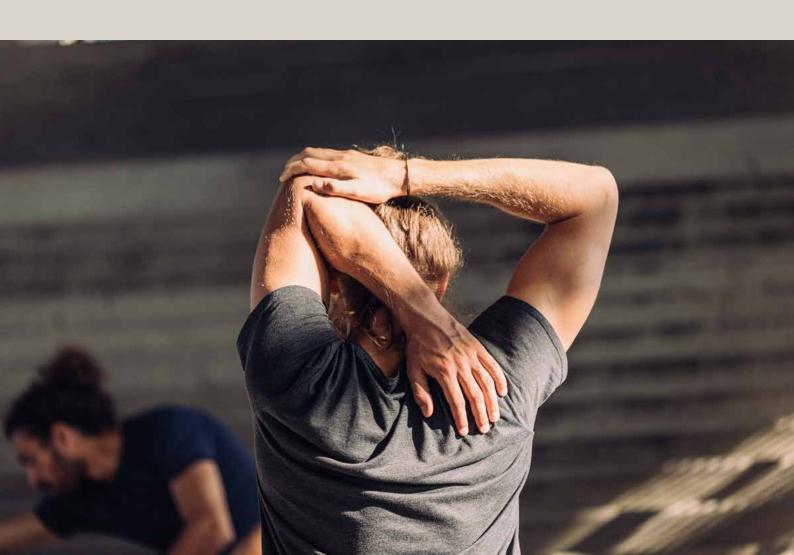
A finance company such as Rigquipment has interesting perspectives on the industry. Though microgyms commonly make the mistake of trying to self-finance or bootstrap everything, those with a buffer of credit or cash are poised to make a lot of headway in 2021.

**First, payment deferral requests are down 84 percent since April.** This is a good sign that gyms are recovering their cash flow and paying their bills again.

On the downside, **5 percent of gyms went out of business between April and October,** which is five times higher than normal. This figure is supported by numbers from other sources—see Arbox and AGuard data above.

But here's the silver lining: **Applications for financing to buy out an existing business are up 40 percent.** That means more successful gyms are taking over failing gyms, which is a huge win for everyone—clients get better service, coaches get better jobs and the failing owner is bailed out.

Interestingly, Rigquipment reports that used equipment prices also increased about 22 percent over historical levels. This is probably due to scarcity: More than one retailer reported they're sold out of everything. One even sold "the broken dumbbell we used to prop the doors open."





# **ASSURANCE**

TWO-BRAIN GYMS

### Better days are ahead.

COVID created a brand new category of client and woke the unmotivated.

While 2020 was tough, Two-Brain gyms are largely profitable, with some hitting record years despite the shutdowns.

First, the average Two-Brain gym is running at an annualized profit of 15 percent. Despite losing revenue during shutdowns, Two-Brain gyms are still going to have a successful year. In fact, Two-Brain gyms make 63 percent more revenue than the average gyms in our survey and partner data.

They're also working less. The average Two-Brain gym owner is working 36 hours per week.

How are they doing it?

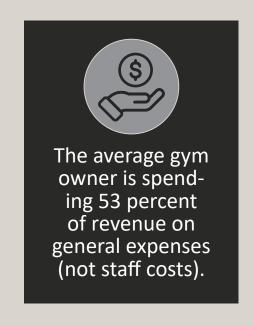
Higher client value: The average ARM in a Two-Brain gym is \$184 per client per month.

Our partner data showed that 92 percent of gyms have an ARM lower than \$150 per month, and 50 percent have an ARM lower than \$100.

The average Two-Brain gym also made some necessary cuts during COVID. On average, our gyms removed around \$3,000 per month in expenses by renegotiating leases and loans, and they removed an average of \$1,500 in staff costs as staff received wage subsidies or stopped working part-time at the gym.

The most interesting part is that these changes set Two-Brain gyms up for even greater success long term. Revenue has not returned to pre-COVID levels, but neither has spending—and a gym's ability to reach a high profit can be limited by its expenses. Here's where gym owners in Two-Brain spend their money:





# **ASSURANCE**

TWO-BRAIN GYMS

With that in mind, my goal in 2021 will be to provide more of the things that gym owners are paying extra for elsewhere. We did this with our Nutrition Business program and Online Coaching Business program this year (both included for free to Two-Brain gyms), and we'll roll out more programs before the end of January 2021.

Overall, things look promising despite a very tough year. Recall this data from Gym Lead Machine:

- The average gym owner reported eight new members a month.
- The average gym website gets 500 new visitors and 92 returning visitors each month.
- Web traffic is up 19 percent from COVID lows.
- The average gym is booking 67 percent of all website leads for a free intro.
- The average gym is closing 63 percent of leads who book a free intro.

# **LEADERSHIP: WHO WILL LEAD US?**

Many leaders broke under the pressure in 2020. Other leaders emerged to fill the vacuum.

In individual gyms, owners with a high effective hourly rate (EHR) continued to earn really well during COVID, suggesting that the same team and systems that made them profitable also protected them from danger. This wasn't really correlated to number of staff or full-time/part-time status, which reinforces the idea that the quality of the staff, not the quantity, is what's important. And while coach education is part of that, personality and engagement are far more important, especially in chaotic times.

Microgym owners and coaches are doing better at leading their clients than big globo-gyms are.

But who will lead the industry?

CROSSFIT?

CrossFit started 2020 without a succession plan, but founder Greg Glassman sold the company in July. Backed by a few investors, Eric Roza took over as CEO in August.

CrossFit is a licensing body with two separate value propositions. The first is certification in the method of CrossFit. The second is affiliation (licensing the CrossFit brand) to use on your physical gym.

Each should be considered separately, though the lines are often blurred. What CrossFit brought to the surface this year is that branding and affiliation are deeply personal choices.

I started 2020 as a CrossFit affiliate but cancelled my affiliation in June. Within three hours of notifying Affiliate Support, I got a call from Dave Castro. He asked me to keep the affiliation, and I agreed to hold onto the rights to CrossFit Catalyst but removed the brand from my gym entirely. Our city knows us as Catalyst Fitness, so changing our sign wasn't a big deal. But it wasn't a decision I took lightly after 11 years as an affiliate, and I acknowledge that my personal experience with Greg Glassman isn't shared by everyone.

Through this filter of personal experience, I can't make a blanket recommendation: Everyone will have to audit the value of the brand for themselves.

If you're considering making a change and affiliating, deaffiliating or reaffiliating, you'll have to go through this decision on your own. My annual expense audit is simple: "Is this investment helping the business/not affecting the business/hurting the business?"

I was willing to pay the CrossFit affiliation fee even when the "CrossFit" name stopped helping my business because I love the mission. When the value clearly became less than zero, I took the name off my gym—but even that decision came after years of being disenfranchised with "HQ" and Glassman himself.

Personally, I like Eric Roza a lot. Has the value of affiliation increased in the last six months? Not yet. Is that "yet" enough to keep you affiliated? It is for me, but I don't have anything to lose here.

I'm also personally fine with private equity firms financing the purchase in order to make CrossFit profitable, even if it requires a different affiliate model. If they can make CrossFit more valuable, they deserve to profit from it. But affiliation hasn't become more valuable yet. I'm willing to pay more if it does, but after paying tribute to an ideology for more than a decade, my brand has evolved to be more than a method.

CrossFit gyms are really inexpensive to open compared to the alternatives. That doesn't mean they're easy to keep open. And as a licensing body instead of a franchisor, CrossFit has no legal obligation to help its affiliates. Though the financial reasons for helping constituents seem obvious (more affiliates equal more revenue for CrossFit Inc.), we really can't count on large-scale representation at a government level.

GYM OWNERS ASSOCIATIONS?

Groups such as the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) are different from certifying bodies. The value of an industry association is in data reporting and lobbying power.

Associations usually host one or two large summit events for their members every year, publish reports based on the data they collect and lobby governments to create laws that are favorable to association members.

But when legal action was most important, industry associations struggled to provide any help.

IHRSA published some decent letters that gym owners could send to their government officials. But still, gyms were among the first to close and last to reopen in most places around the world.

IHRSA's November report said that Lifetime Fitness was forecasting a \$500-million loss, and several of the largest chains—the funders of IHRSA—had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Meanwhile, the IDEA Health and Fitness Association moved its annual meetup—the largest in the industry—online. It published resources from others but didn't appear to take any action to lobby governments to reopen gyms (see: <a href="https://www.ideafit.com/covid19-updates/">https://www.ideafit.com/covid19-updates/</a>).

The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) is a fraction of the size of IHRSA or IDEA but at least provided some useful updates on which U.S. states were open during COVID.

Overall, no association stepped up to make a measurable impact when the industry was in crisis. And because most make the majority of their membership fees from globo-gyms (who suffered the most in 2020), I predict a lot of turnover in 2021.

One of the newest groups is Community Gyms Coalition (<a href="https://gymscoalition.org/">https://gymscoalition.org/</a>), which has gathered some collective power in the CrossFit, Barry's Bootcamp and Orangetheory Fitness communities, as well as in other microgym groups.

### FRANCHISES?

We spoke to many fitness franchisees this year and heard the same message over and over: The things that usually make a franchise strong were the very things that made franchises weak in 2020.

All the benefits of a franchise—a preset model, done-for-you pricing, group purchasing power, brand marketing—can look pretty attractive to a solo-preneur trying to figure everything out on the fly. In fact, established entrepreneurs often buy franchises because they don't want to spend years and thousands of dollars trying to figure it all out while burning money.

### But in times of crisis, a franchise becomes extremely fragile.

As a franchisee, you don't have the ability to pivot your core offering. You can't simply take your business online overnight; you have to wait for the franchisor to act.

You might not have the ability to cut expenses. As a franchisee, you might be contractually tied to a lease or franchise fees or a certain number of staff.

You could easily lose all your clients—and all your revenue—with no way to get any back and no end in sight.

Almost overnight, the value of gym memberships went to zero. No one can sell "access" anymore.

Within a week, the value of exercise programming fell to zero. No one can sell workouts anymore.

Soon, the value of coach-led Zoom and online classes will fall to zero. Clients know how to enter "free workout class" into a search engine.

### The only thing that's retaining its value is coaching.

Two-Brain gyms made a quick pivot to customized online coaching. Spending four to six minutes per client per day to tailor group programming has resulted in a greater than 90 percent revenue retention rate. Some have actually grown in client numbers and revenue since reopening. And many have been able to cut their largest expenses.

These gyms could do it because they've built "antifragile" businesses. Their failures—and their successes—are theirs alone.

Many have licensed the "CrossFit" name through affiliation to benefit from the branding (and because they align with CrossFit's values). Others haven't. But even within that affiliate model, the terms of licensure are so loose that CrossFit affiliates can make fast moves. They're antifragile.

### **CERTIFYING BODIES?**

By and large, certifying bodies exist to improve the fitness education of their trainers—not their business education.

I finished my four-year degree with a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) credential. It took me a year to get my first client. And on the day of the first appointment, I asked myself, "What do I actually do with this client?"

Certifying bodies have a vested interest in keeping their trainers and coaches active in the fitness game long term. Visit any of their websites and you'll encounter a sales pitch for continuing-education credits, exam schedules and virtual summits. Now, you might even find some tips for training athletes at home, or—more likely—how to clean your equipment properly.

But while certifying bodies can help people coach better, 2020 had few coaching problems. In fact, the industry has few coaching problems. But the industry has a lot of "making a living problems."

Weakened by lawsuits, the National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) really isn't as popular as it once was. The National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) certifies more trainers, but those trainers usually don't recertify after two years—they're out of the fitness business.

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) published a "<u>call to action</u>" statement in August, which fitness lobbies could potentially use with governments as they work to get people moving during and after the pandemic. It's a useful weapon, but so far no one appears to be wielding it.

All this tells me that the industry won't be saved by certifications and certifying bodies. The ideologies really don't matter, and your method doesn't determine your success. Good coaching isn't the problem; good business is.

# THE TWO-BRAIN MODEL

LET THE BEST GYMS LEAD

My mission is to make 1 million gym owners wealthy. They're hardworking and generous, and they're trying to solve huge cultural problems.

Here's how we can unite microgyms and coaches:

### DATA

We need a broad, inclusive data set. We need to know what the best gyms in the world are doing and then teach it back to the rest. We also need to know why some gyms fail so that we can get those poisonous mistakes out of our collective bloodstream.

What we're doing about it: Over the last four years, I've spent more than \$500,000 building dashboards and data-extraction tools. Now we have the largest data set in the industry. This is primarily due to our strategic partners, who have contributed heavily to this guide: Wodify, Arbox, Incite Tax, AGuard, Rigquipment and Gym Lead Machine. And our own data set at Two-Brain is growing (literally) by the minute. This guide is the first large publication of many.

# **CONVERSATIONS**

We need positive collaboration, not "competition." You've seen the worst-case scenario: gym owners calling each other names, attacking others' ideas, accusing potential collaborators of "stealing" clients.

What we're doing about it: We have the most progressive Facebook group in the world. But we need more than that: We need to bring gym owners together.

When the COVID Crisis pushed us to alter plans for our annual Summit, we came up with something that I honestly think is better: Regional meetups, held three times per year, around the world. They're free to Two-Brain clients, but other gym owners can buy tickets. In seminar and workshop sessions presented by Certified Two-Brain Mentors and regional facilitators, gym owners will work together to improve their businesses—and the industry.

# REPRESENTATION

While I'm no fan of a board-of-directors scenario (imagine if your clients had a vote on how you ran your business), it makes a lot of sense to identify your top performers and teach their strategies to everyone else.

Some franchises do this, though not many. But the CrossFit Games do it really well for fitness. The Games create aspirational models of fitness. We can pick apart routines, habits, training and diet and build new models for success from them. We can do the same thing for the fitness business. We can now identify the top microgyms in the world through real tests, interrogate the owners and share what they know. This is literally how the Two-Brain Model works.

# TRANSPARENT LEADERSHIP

Like me, you probably saw a dozen calls to "sign a petition" or "join our GoFundMe" when COVID hit. And if, like me, you dug deeper, you probably uncovered a hidden motive in many cases.

For example, one of the "free Facebook groups" was a cover for a licensing body. Basically, by signing its petition you recorded your name as in favor of having them sell you a license in the future.

When the world emerges from the COVID-19 lockdown, independent gym owners will find themselves swimming in a larger ocean with fewer sharks. They'll have new tools: online training, nutrition coaching and a hybrid online/in-person model we call "Flex." They'll be thinking differently about their equipment and space expenses. The best gyms will be stronger than ever before, and they'll have far less competition.

Gym ownership has always been a game of attrition. COVID just knocked five years off the natural progression of the fitness industry. Licensees and solo-preneurs who pivot fast will benefit. Franchisees won't.

When the world is constant and predictable, it's attractive to own a franchise. No guesswork, proven models, and someone else to blame if it fails. But when the world changes—as it always does—it's far more beneficial to be the master of your own fortune. And if you've already built your plans and playbook, why do you need a franchise at all?

Franchises aren't going to lead the industry forward because their rigidity makes them inflexible to evolution—fast and slow.

The ACSM and NSCA aren't going to step into the role of transparent leadership because their boards are full of scientists who rely on grants to survive.

The associations didn't prove their ability to lead when it really came down to lobbying power.

The key to the future is to understand that leaders will come and go. We need to get what we can from them and then seek the expert who can help us next.

If the leaders can pivot, they'll earn the trust of the industry. If they can't, they'll be left behind.

### THE TWO-BRAIN MODEL

LET THE BEST GYMS LEAD

# **MOVEMENT**

You can use the data in this book to improve your gym.

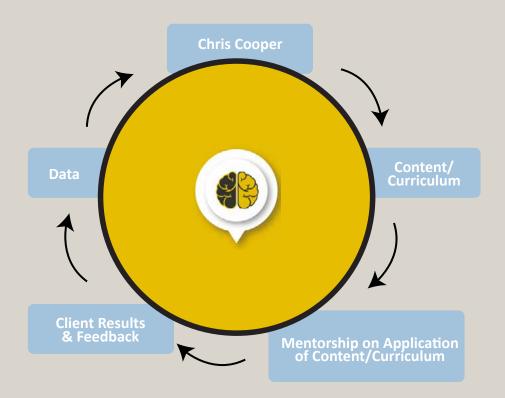
Two-Brain gyms have an advantage. We constantly use data to find the new best practices and then teach them back to every gym in the Two-Brain Family.

Every month, we look at the Two-Brain Leaderboards for every metric reported here. We interview the top five gyms in each category every quarter. We find out what they're doing and put it in our curriculum.

Sometimes, the data shows us that we don't know enough about a topic. For example, when gyms had to pivot to online, we didn't have enough experience to say, "Do it exactly like this." So we brought in the experts in online training to help.

When we don't possess the specific knowledge that we need right now, we ask, "Who is the best in the world at this?" and hire them. Then we share their knowledge with gyms around the globe.

As Two-Brain gyms grow faster and faster, we share their successes (and their methods) with everyone. This is how the industry moves forward.



# **MOVEMENT**

THE TWO-BRAIN MODEL

COVID's pressure showed us where the fitness industry needed help most.

First, coaches need help coaching the "why" instead of the "what." Instead of just correcting movement faults in air squats, coaches need to tell their clients why a workout is important for them and how to use it to achieve their goals.

We immediately found some of the most successful online coaches in the world and built an Online Coaching course on the new <a href="TwoBrainCoaching.com">TwoBrainCoaching.com</a> platform.

Next, coaches need to deliver nutrition coaching and mindfulness to their clients. This is more important than ever before. We built the Two-Brain Coaching Nutrition Course to help coaches deliver nutrition coaching without getting sued. We put the business of nutrition coaching right on the Two-Brain Roadmap so our clients would get everything they needed for free. And we built a new Mindfulness program to help coaches deliver this now-critical piece of the puzzle.

One of my favorite outcomes of 2020 was that a lot of the "gym gurus" went out of business. But as a new crop emerges, it's more important than ever to have a place to find core truth. So we commissioned this data-driven publication to provide a solid base on which gyms can build their futures.

During the summer of 2020, it became more important than ever to provide gym owners with clarity. Trying to pivot to a new business model is hard enough, but sorting through all the industry noise, government regulations and staff challenges created a lot of overwhelm. So we published a Daily Brief to support our step-by-step guides. These briefs provided a specific directive to gym owners: Do this one thing.



# **MOVEMENT**

THE TWO-BRAIN MODEL

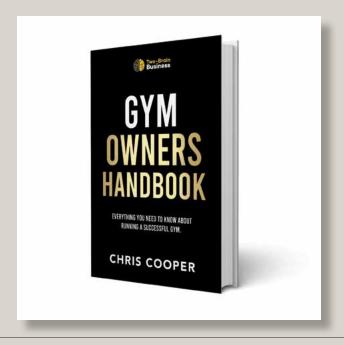
During CrossFit's transition of ownership, the idea of "regional" meetups was heartily embraced by gym owners. Tired of feeling alone, especially after the forced "life in captivity" of the COVID Crisis, gym owners needed to meet with others in person. And when our Summit couldn't provide an in-person meeting, we moved to 30 regional in-person meetups, plus a live event online. We'll continue this regional model in 2021, with 30 events around the world: on Feb. 13, on June 19 and 20, and in September on a date to be announced. These are free for all Two-Brain clients and open to all gym owners.

Our 2021 Summit will continue to feature the experts that gym owners need now. Our first keynote speaker is retired U.S. Navy SEAL officer Jocko Willink.

As Two-Brain gyms showed their resilience through 2020 and ultimately rebounded on the other side, we were asked for help from other industries (and even some of the franchises that we'd normally consider "competitors" in the fitness industry). So we're certifying more mentors to meet the demand.

We also published our Roadmap—a collection of over 400 mini-masterclasses for gym owners. Now mentors use our Dashboard App to diagnose a gym owner's priorities using their data, then prescribe action from our Roadmap. This helps gym owners become more profitable faster than ever before.

Finally, I published my best book on the fitness industry ever: "The Gym Owners Handbook," available on <u>Amazon</u>. In running the world's largest gym mentorship practice, I've discovered your business has two parts: your operations and your audience. Each of those two parts can be built according to a recipe. And this is the recipe book. It's the step-by-step guide to building a gym, and it's full of tactical, actionable advice entrepreneurs can use today.



# **MOVEMENT**

LOOKING TO 2021

COVID sped up the evolution of the fitness industry. The change was painful, but it was coming anyway, and the urgency actually put many gyms ahead of the game.

The key is to be open to questions—"How can I do this?"—instead of pessimistic—"I can't do it!"

The strongest gym owners are the ones who bend instead of trying to ram "their way" through.

The first part of the COVID Crisis was a three-month test. Imagine you tried to move your business online without the forced urgency and with the safety net of reopening your bricks-and-mortar location if you wanted to. You could fight for years and go down the wrong path. COVID didn't allow that; it told you quickly whether your idea worked or not.

Strength is the root of many elements of fitness. But as 2020 proved, flexibility could be the root of good business. 2020 was won not by the largest gyms or the gyms with the most members. 2020 was won by the owners who could pivot fast and still carry the trust of their clients.

Most of the best gyms are still in business, and they should be a beacon for the best coaches in the future.



### CONTRIBUTOR, SPONSOR AND PARTNER INFORMATION



#### Affiliateguard.info

AGuard is an industry-specific program providing elite insurance coverage for gyms.

The company was founded by Vaughn Vernon in 2006. After completing his first CrossFit workout, Vaughn was intrigued and quickly turned his insurance book of contractors into CrossFit gyms. Though the program was originally created with CrossFit gyms in mind, Affiliate Guard now serves hundreds of gyms that are not affiliates.

We work with multiple insurance companies to provide you with a competitive and outstanding insurance policy through the Affiliate Guard program. Our connections with these specific carriers allow us to compare prices and coverages to get you the best policy that suits your business's needs.

The AGuard team specializes in working with gyms. We know your sport and will protect your box with every tool in our arsenal. We understand insurance is the kind of thing no one wants to think about—luckily for you, we think about it every minute of every day. Our team is incredibly responsive to your needs and will make sure your claims and questions get answered.

We help protect you so you can focus on what's most important: protecting your clients.





#### <u>Arboxapp.com</u>

Arbox is a leading fitness management platform that was created in 2015 to fulfill the core needs of fitness business owners. The goal at Arbox is to help gym and studio owners who want to simultaneously grow their businesses while focusing on training and working with clients. The Arbox platform was developed by a team with direct ties to the fitness world through CrossFit and personal training, and it caters to entrepreneurs in any fitness discipline. Whether you're running a gym or CrossFit, yoga, pilates or MMA studio, Arbox can help you optimize your business.

The platform is built around a set of core tools that help you be better. They will aid in streamlining day-to-day operations, including staff and member management as well as handling and processing of payments. Beyond the core features, Arbox helps you get stronger by providing tools that focus on retention and engagement with members—they include schedule management and an innovative members app. Arbox has also implemented special COVID-19 features to ease interactions with your members, including online Zoom classes and digital health waivers. Finally, Arbox helps you think bigger by offering tools to enable sustained growth by scaling your marketing and sales efforts to bring in more members every day.

Arbox also provides gym and studio owners with a detailed dashboard that includes the top metrics needed to optimize your business—as approved by Two-Brain Business. Easily stay on top of all the data and reporting from your gym within seconds of logging into the Arbox platform. With Arbox, you will stay ahead of the competition, spend more time coaching your members and take your business to the next level.





#### **Drivennutrition.net**

For the last seven years, Driven Nutrition® has been the premiere supplement provider to gym owners nationwide. It was founded by CEO Jason Rule in 2013 after he recognized an untapped opportunity for gyms to generate revenue through retail sales to members.

Driven Nutrition created a line of premium supplements formulated with high-quality raw ingredients that were scientifically studied and proven effective. Driven™ then offered its product line exclusively to affiliated gyms, providing owners with an easy and effective way to generate additional revenue from purchases their members were already making elsewhere.

Driven has consistently maintained its focus on using the highest-quality raw ingredients, providing a premium line of results-driven products, helping consumers reach their individual goals, developing a culture of trust from its wholesale and retail partners, and doing everything possible to ensure the success and long-term viability of those partners. What distinguishes Driven Nutrition from other supplement brands is, indisputably, the in-depth training and education the Driven team provides its gym owners and coaches on building retail programs, specifically in the supplement space. Driven offers an expansive educational library and unlimited marketing assets, all of which are readily available and easily accessible.

When COVID-19 hit the U.S., Driven Nutrition announced an initiative to drive revenue back to those gyms facing closure through a drop-ship program called "Gym Drive." Each participating gym was assigned a unique affiliate link to be shared with members and friends for the purchase of supplements and gear, and 40 percent of every retail purchase made using those links went back to the gyms. The program has been hugely successful and demonstrates yet again the level of commitment Driven has in the industry. It is safe to say that the Driven team has extensive sales knowledge and keeps their thumbs on the pulse of the supplement industry, creating a one-of-a-kind partnership with each client.

# FOREVER FIERCE

#### Foreverfierce.com

Forever Fierce is a custom apparel vendor whose primary focus is the fitness industry. We are dedicated to saving you time, money and effort when running apparel projects for your business. Most importantly, we take the guesswork out of the process by providing the tools and strategies needed for success.

Headquartered in New York's Hudson Valley, our operation is run by three former athletes and current coaches. We understand the intensity of competition and the hard work, desire and training it takes to become successful on today's playing field. We're dedicated to promoting a no-quit attitude for athletes, coaches, businesses and organizations through our original apparel designs.

Our skilled graphic design staff is dedicated to developing an exclusive concept for your organization. Not sure of the best T or tank? Don't sweat it—we know what sells best. We'll provide you with a focused catalog to eliminate the research and legwork that go into finding the right style. Choose from our signature collection of ready-to-sell templates and take advantage of our marketing templates and social-media-ready mock-ups.

In addition, we give each of our clients the opportunity to set up a plan for an entire year of apparel. This helps keep you on track and provides your clients with the variety they demand when it comes to new products. Best of all? There are no art, design or production (screen) fees—keeping our products competitively priced. To get started, head to our "Request" page, fill out the form, and one of our account managers will get back to you as quickly as possible. While you're working one on one with your account manager, our designers will put together a custom look based on your needs. We stand by every project that goes out the door, and we'll see yours through until it's been delivered and you're 100 percent satisfied.



#### GYM LEAD MACHINE

#### **Gymleadmachine.com**

Gym Lead Machine is your all-in-one marketing and website solution.

For years, gym owners have had underperforming websites that cost too much and did absolutely nothing to grow the business.

Here's a short list of all the features they lacked: lead generation, capture and nurturing systems; communication platforms and two-way texting; email integration; retention and marketing automations; landing pages; and appointment scheduling.

These archaic sites were usually badly laid out and didn't have calls to action. And yet gym owners paid \$5,000 or more and waited months for them.

Fitness entrepreneurs actually had a lot of complaints about existing options. A few examples:

"Why do I need five different software providers and a bunch of linking systems to capture and nurture a lead?"

"Why does it take \$5,000 and way too much time to set up a website that can't even help me sell my service?"

"Why doesn't my landing page generate any leads even though my ads are sending people there?"

Gym Lead Machine listened to the complaints and found out exactly what the best gym owners in the world need when it comes to web presence and marketing. Then they developed an all-in-one solution for gym owners.

Now, GLM builds superior gym websites for a fraction of the cost of other providers, and they rid owners of an average of \$4,878 in software and service fees. They do that in days, not months. And these sites don't just sit there. They're constantly updated to ensure they have all the latest features that will convert clients.

Your website shouldn't be an expense. It should show a return on investment and help you grow. For an engaging, professional website that handles all elements of marketing and communication, contact <a href="Gym Lead Machine">Gym Lead Machine</a>.



## INCITE TAX AND ACCOUNTING

#### Incitetax.com

When running a microgym, Incite Tax knows you need increased cash flow to be financially resilient. They know most gym owners live paycheck to paycheck despite working a heroic amount of hours, and they know gym owners are getting closer and closer to burnout.

You didn't start your gym thinking it would be such a burden on your bank account. Incite Tax knows you face a challenge: balance your mission of giving health to the world with the need to make a profit.

It can be stressful not having money in your bank account, which is why Incite Tax owner John Briggs wrote "Profit First for Microgyms" and created a system that increases your cash flow so you can be home at dinner time and your gym can thrive.

We know what gym owners deal with day to day because John owns a gym, too. At Incite, we live and breathe the lifestyle you do. Not only do we understand the pains you have, but we also have a simple path laid out to give you the results you're looking for as quickly as you're ready to get them.

Incite Tax has been disrupting the accounting industry for over a decade and making sure microgyms, personal trainers and fitness professionals are strategically growing their profits and saving money on their taxes. Incite's philosophy is "the IRS sucks" and wants to bleed business owners dry of their money. That's why the tactics and methods Incite Tax is teaching gym owners will help them become financially resilient and deal with any uncertainties that will arise.

No matter what your financial needs are—streamlined bookkeeping, cash-flow consulting or tax strategy—Incite will help you become financially stable. So, pick up a copy of Incite's book, "Profit First for Microgyms," on Amazon and schedule a call with Incite Tax to take your financial resiliency to the next level.



## PROFIT BY INTENTION

#### Profitbyintention.com

I created Profit By Intention initially to help business owners generate real profits within their business and to guide them on their journey to building a better business. I wanted to find a way to integrate my financial planning and accounting backgrounds into one solution for small business owners.

At Profit By Intention, we decided to serve the Canadian health and fitness industry because we found the business owners in this industry had the same passion for their work as we do. We take away your need to worry about the financial aspects of your business so you can concentrate on what you do best. We do this by integrating our proven Profit First framework into our overall financial programs for small businesses.

We leverage the latest technology to provide bookkeeping services for clients across the country. We follow the Pure Bookkeeping best-practice methods to ensure your books are always clean and up to date, and we use an expense-tracking software that keeps images of your receipts together with your Quick-Books entries to help audit-proof your business. Clean books allow us to maximize your corporate tax return to ensure you are paying the least amount of tax you are legally obligated to pay.

As a mastery-level Certified Profit First Professional, we integrate the Profit First method in everything that we do to ensure your business is running profitably. Finally, as a Certified Financial Planner, we also leverage our knowledge to ensure that your business and personal finances are integrated and that your overall wealth is maximized. We provide investment, insurance, health benefits, group RRSP, mortgage and real estate services.

We value long-term partner relationships with our clients and constantly aim to grow together. Partner with us and allow us to help you build a better business.

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—Dan Baker

# RIGQUIPMENT FINANCE

#### Rigquipment.com

Rigquipment Finance is the only nationwide small-business lender that focuses exclusively on the boutique fitness and wellness industry. Rigquipment operates as a direct lender, not a broker or middleman, and maintains full control over all facets of the lending life cycle—from application through underwriting, funding and collections.

Founded in 2013 by a group of coaches and fitness enthusiasts, Rigquipment has a mission to empower the entrepreneurs on the frontline of the battle against obesity and chronic disease, helping them build successful businesses that have a lasting impact on their communities. In pursuit of this mission, Rigquipment Finance has invested more than \$18 million to help nearly 500 gym owners open or expand their facilities.

At Rigquipment, we believe that the size of a business shouldn't determine its likelihood of success. We believe that small business owners deserve access to the same opportunities and resources that the largest companies enjoy. Above all, we believe that a lender should not only care about the long-term success of your business but also be able to provide you with the guidance, tools and resources to help you succeed. Unfortunately, we recognize that this is rarely the case—especially when it comes to small business lending. But why?

From the perspective of a lender, it all comes down to risk assessment—or accurately predicting the likelihood that a business will survive to fulfill its payment obligation. In general, traditional lenders lack the specialization and/or resources needed to evaluate a small business request for financing efficiently enough to even justify the cost of the evaluation alone. At best, this results in unfavorable borrowing terms for the small business owner. At worst, it results in an immediate denial.

Rigquipment's entire lending model was designed around solving these problems, ensuring that we are able to truly understand your business, your goals and the obstacles you have to overcome as a small business owner. We view every application as the first step in a long-term partnership and are committed to ensuring your business is successful. Unlike any other time in history, 2020 has proven just how important this commitment is.



## TWO-BRAIN COACHING

#### Twobraincoaching.com

Two-Brain Coaching is an international company dedicated to the development of fitness and nutrition coaches.

Through a combination of online learning and ongoing mentorship, we tailor a coach's depth and breadth of knowledge to match the desired career.

Similar to how a client's learning curve begins with a low level of complexity, we've found that the same process builds world-class coaches. For this reason, we have created a stepwise model that layers on complexity for effective learning. We don't teach a methodology—those are plentiful in today's fitness landscape. We teach guiding principles that allow the coach to apply any methodology in support of clients' goals.

We provide comprehensive, one-to-one mentorship support through qualified fitness, nutrition and mindset coaches. Our Nutrition Coaching program was developed by a registered dietitian and sports nutritionist, and it's one of only two North American programs to offer a habits-based certification.

Our highly qualified coaches guide clients through to certification in our signature programs: Two-Brain Coaching First Degree, Two-Brain Coaching Second Degree, Nutrition Coaching, Youth Programs and Online Coaching. Our system is designed to help coaches refine their coaching voice, to identify and capitalize on their niches, and to master the psychological and social aspects of coaching.

The aim is for coaches to build confidence in themselves. That happens not by sending them to lead group classes first or having them learn anatomy and physiology or even the basics of programming. It begins by first teaching them the social side of coaching: how to interact with others.

We take this approach because, as former U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt once famously said, "Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care."



## WODIFY

#### Wodify.com

Wodify is the ultimate fitness management software, with 5,000-plus of the world's top gyms trusting Wodify to run their businesses.

The problem: Gym management is time consuming and complex, which makes gym owners and operators feel overwhelmed and stressed. Wodify believes it shouldn't be this complicated. For gym owners relying on outdated software, manual processes, and tedious hard copies of contracts and waivers (who uses a fax machine anymore?), Wodify provides a welcome alternative. Wodify's robust software helps gym owners reclaim their time, grow financially, remain confident in their success, and have a gym they are proud of.

Wodify Core is the industry-leading all-in-one gym management platform. Its software tracks and automates running a fitness business—leaving gym owners free to scale their membership base and run dozens of classes each week, all without sacrificing the quality of their athletes' experiences. With Wodify's automated billing system, you can keep your invoices in one place, ensuring you never miss a payment again. Through easily accessible insights, gym owners can quickly access reports on everything from class attendance to financials. Wodify's seamlessly integrated appointment system lets you run No Sweat Intros and high-value one-on-one services without the need for a different software tool.

In addition to the Core product, Wodify has multiple add-on services to help you grow your business further, including automated programming, integrated websites, real-time heart-rate tracking and more.

All of this comes with Wodify's world-class performance tracking features, which are used by millions of athletes around the world and are proven to increase retention and engagement.

"I can't imagine using three different pieces of software," said CrossFit Mayhem owner Rich Froning Jr., "when one does it all."





Learn how to build a resilient fitness business:

twobrainbusiness.com