

Memberships are still growing ...

2010 Australian Fitness Industry Survey brought to you by Ezypay will again provide the owners and managers of Australian fitness clubs with the insights into club operations, staffing, sales, marketing and finance along with the thoughts feeling and perceptions of the members of their clubs.

To provide additional guidance and direction this year Ezypay invited a panel of leading industry professionals to discuss some of the major outcomes from this year's survey results. The AFIS expert panel included;

Grant Gamble (GG)	Owner – Bodywise
Justin Wilshaw (JW)	CEO – Contours
Gayle Brimble (GB)	Training Team Captain – Australian Institute Fitness
Megan Crow (MC)	Business Advisor - Christchurch City Council, NZ
Jamie Hayes (JH)	Managing Director - Healthy Inspirations
Edel Kilmartin (EK)	Director of Operations - Curves
Justin Tamsett (JT)	CEO - Active Management
Simon Hall (SH)	Marketing Manager - Ezypay
Celeste Kirby-Brown (CKB)	Sales & Marketing Director – Ezypay

In this article the 2010 AFIS expert panel discuss the growth of membership numbers in the last 12 months.

Survey outcomes - Over 64% of clubs have had an increase in membership numbers in the last year, this is 10% up on the year before. (See graph below.)

Question - What factors do you believe have lead to the large increase of membership numbers?

GG I don't believe the economy has affected this. It is probably other forces. There's been such a growth in the 24 hour clubs and PT studios, as much as they are cannibalising the industry in one way, they are also making the consumer more aware. I think the average consumer is a lot savvier today. They shop around a little more. They may be prompted by a new club opening across the road and that's made them go in there. I also think it is far more of an issue from an education stand point and the media has done us some favours in that regard. It's just a general swell in the understanding of the importance health and well-being.

JW I think you make a very valid point. I don't think fitness is seen as an add-on to your life anymore. Fitness and well-being is seen as part of your life, and I think the media has done us a lot of favours there and people are more inclined to go to a gym. Five or so years ago the gym was seen as a trendy social place to go in the city. Gyms are now seen more part of a persons life and well-being.

GB Outdoor PT has grown enormously. When people are driving past and seeing all these groups exercising outdoors this may trigger in their minds that they need to do something, "I really should get to the gym". Females may not have gone to a traditional gym and have now tried one of the new style express clubs or different classes to give

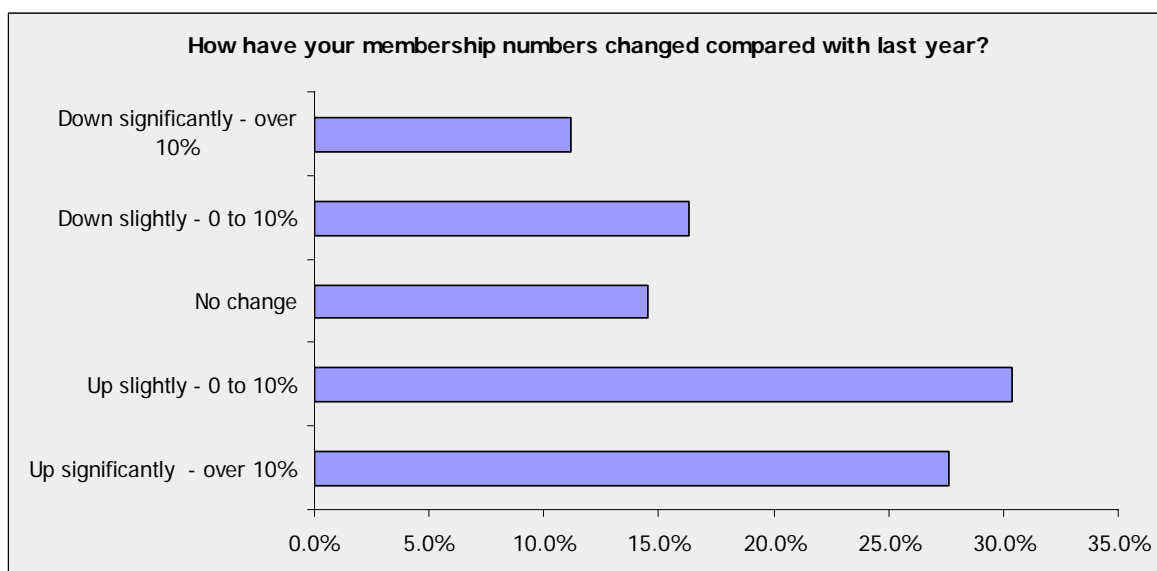
them confidence to go the gym. With the [increase in] diversities and styles [of fitness] the definition of what fitness and exercise is has changed.

EK I think (due to the poor economy) it's a two fold thing for both consumers and businesses. People wonder what they can take control of. Exercise, health and fitness are something they can control where they can't control external factors. Whilst that fear factor was going on in the business world, getting back into business with your own business (like a franchise) is also being able to take control.

Summary

Membership growth has been due to:

- An increase in general awareness of fitness and well-being;
- More clubs in the marketplace;
- Trying to control an area of your life in an unstable economy;
- More outdoor visual prompts from boot camps and personal trainers;
- A move to casual usage rather than memberships; and
- An increase in media exposure to health and wellness issues.



The 2010 AFIS discussion series covers 6 critical fitness topics including, staff quality, social media, membership fees, retention and growth and the concerns around membership contracts. The full series can be viewed on www.fitnesssurvey.com.au. Visit our stand P22 at the Health and Fitness Expo.

Simon Hall – Marketing Manager - Ezipay Pty Ltd – January 2010