

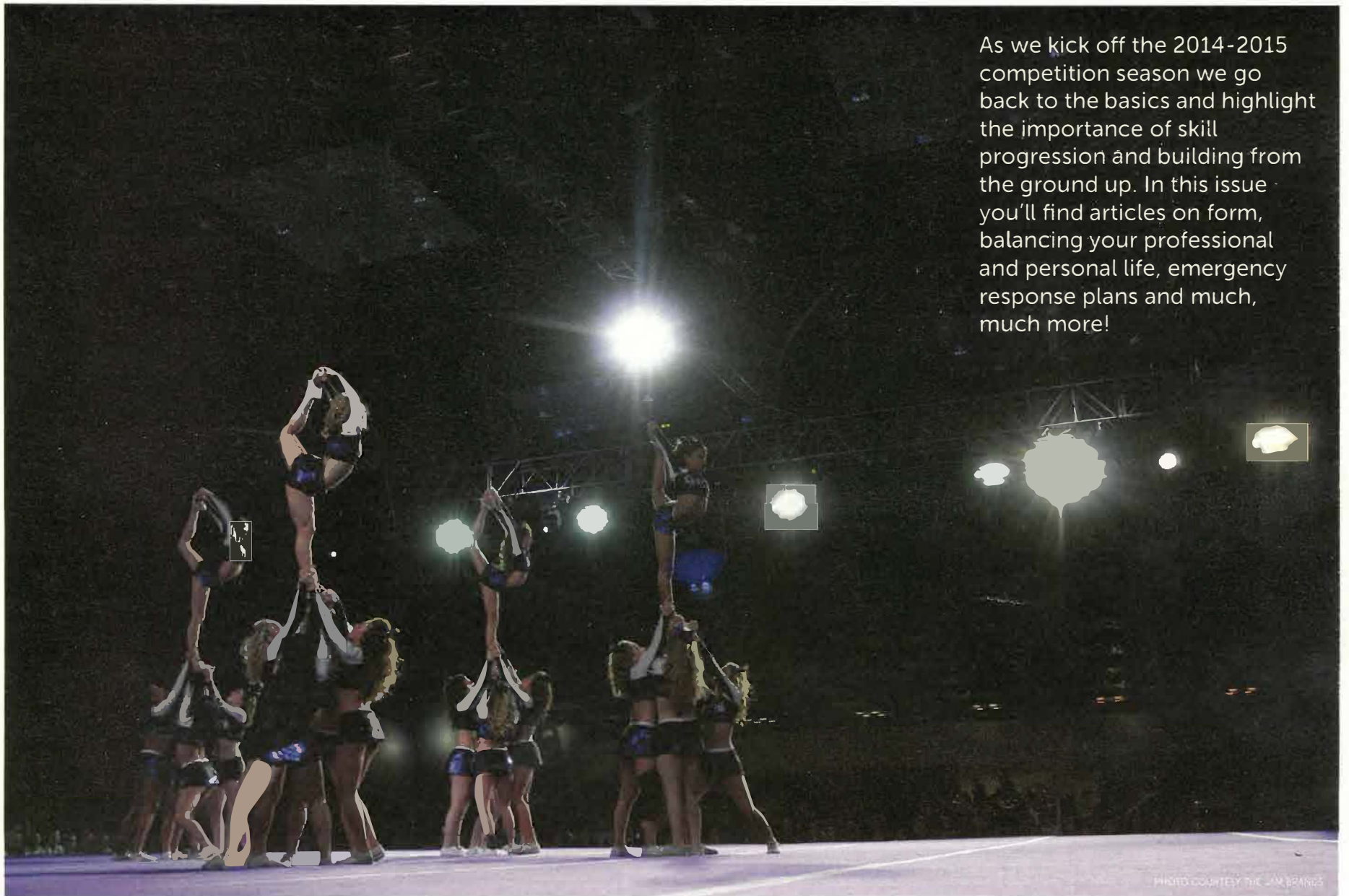
CHEERBIZ

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As we kick off the 2014-2015 competition season we go back to the basics and highlight the importance of skill progression and building from the ground up. In this issue you'll find articles on form, balancing your professional and personal life, emergency response plans and much, much more!

PHOTOS COURTESY THE SAM BRANCS

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: EZ FLEX

We sit down with Ben Anderson, President of EZ Flex Sport Mats, to get the inside scoop on the company's ever-growing presence in the cheer industry.

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT: ACE CHEER COMPANY

CBN chats with Happy Hooper of ACE to find out more about the program and the success behind their teams.

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13 TIPS FOR TEACHING CONFIDENCE

Given that confidence is so important to athletes on and off the floor, it is imperative to understand how it can be built.

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THE LOOK: SHOES

Here we take a sneak peek at several shoes sure to be making a mark on the competition floor this upcoming season!



WORK

LIFE

By Mark Mahoney

ARE YOU STRIKING THE BALANCE?

Guidelines to Achieving Your Healthy Work/Life Balance

You're a gym owner and you're an entrepreneur. You have worked hard to get your business to its present point and you'll work endless hours to get it to where you want it to be.

RESEARCH DRAWS A CLEAR PICTURE OF HOW ENTREPRENEURS AND AVERAGE EMPLOYEES PRIORITIZE ALL HOURS – NOT JUST WORKING ONES.

AMERICANS RANK POORLY IN WORK/LIFE BALANCE RESEARCH, working many more hours than other countries. Our entrepreneurs take this to another level of obsessiveness. While many Americans work more than 50 hours per week, many entrepreneurs work upward of 100 hours per week. These entrepreneurs are spending 60 percent of their total 168 weekly hours working. The “life” time they have left feels the impact of this high working percentage. We looked at research from Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to formulate our percentages. It looks like we can start with a high end of 100 hours of work per week, leaving only 68 hours to divvy up between your family and you.

FIND THE BALANCE THAT MAKES YOU A BETTER LEADER AND DECISION MAKER.

Work/life balance percentages that help entrepreneurs to relieve stress and improve their health (self-improvement, family, fitness and leisure activities) are closely aligned. The research shows that while their total percentage of personal time may not increase tremendously, what they accomplish during that personal time improves. Entrepreneurs with more balanced percentages get more sleep, improve their health and improve the skills that help them to be better business owners and leaders.

Even with a more reasonable balance, working 40 percent of the seven-day workweek still represents 67 hours of work. And while this is a great improvement from 100 hours per week, it is still far above the typical overworked employee’s contribution of 30 percent of their total time – or 50 hours of work per week.

These traits might identify you as one of the obsessed:

- You find it hard to draw a line between work and personal time.
- You struggle to delegate – even though you’ve hired competent and dependable staff.
- You want control of your future.
- You are persistent and determined.

If this sounds like you, you are probably accused of working “all the time” and “ignoring your family.” Even though you make the choice to work, these types of statements make you feel guilty and create a tug of war for you between the amount of time that work consumes in your life and what should be consuming more time in your life.

MAKE IT YOUR WORK/LIFE BALANCE.

You can’t just replicate what you’ve seen someone else do in establishing balance between work and life. It has to be right for you. You have to really do some soul searching about what work/life balance means to you and come clean with yourself about what is keeping you from achieving it. Only then will you know what you have to do in order for a work/life balance plan to be anything other than frustrating for you.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE IS IMPORTANT – EVEN IF IT MEANS DIVERTING SOME OF YOUR ATTENTION AWAY FROM YOUR BUSINESS.

Here’s why:

Regardless of your drive, your energy or your commitment to your business, even you can experience burn out. Burning the candle at both ends – as most entrepreneurs do – escalates burn out.

The Mayo Clinic describes job burnout as a form of stress that leaves one mentally, physically and emotionally exhausted and is combined with feelings of incompetence and doubts about the value of one’s work.

Knowing the “definition”, it is easy to see how burnout saps your energy level and puts you in reactive work mode where you can only deal with day-to-day decisions and tactical operations and convinces you to give up on executing a strategic plan that will improve and grow your gym.

Stress is more likely to manifest in those who work constantly. Your sleeping habits are impacted and that means you’re tired. Lack of rest leads to unclear thinking, reactive decision-making, impaired creativity and – eventually – health issues.

It’s not just about you.

Owners whose work and life are out of balance also don’t create the most effective and supportive work environments for their employees. In your case, this impacts your relationships with instructors and administrative staff, students and families. Eventually, this can change the dynamics of your gym.

Positive results of work/life balance:

- You are happier because you don’t feel guilty about “neglecting” your family.
- You are less stressed because you don’t have the pressure of handling everything.
- You actually feel better about what can be accomplished because your business is benefiting from the skills of specific employees being applied in the right areas.
- You feel better physically and can enjoy the fruits of your labors – and the day-to-day joys of your gym that you missed when your head was buried in your business.
- You are more rested and have the energy to think strategically. Your business benefits from your proactive instead of reactive stance.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW YOU NEED TO MAINTAIN A WORK/LIFE BALANCE, HOW DO YOU DO IT?

While it is flexible and provides you with an easy link to your work, mobile technology is also what may keep you from getting away from work. Learning to manage your addiction to mobility is important to helping you to really be engaged in family time.

Mobile devices also connect you to your personal and family life so totally turning off these devices when you want to disengage is just not practical. However, Mark Mahoney, President and Cofounder of Jackrabbit Technologies, turns off his work email upon occasion so that he can enjoy family and personal time without distraction.

“The key here is having good people on your team. If you know your employees – especially your managers – have good judgment, then turning off work email and allowing them to run things for a few hours or days isn’t such a challenge. Well, at least it isn’t as much of a challenge after you get accustomed to it. As entrepreneurs, none of us want to let someone else hold our baby,” notes Mahoney. “But seeing how well those you’ve trained take charge, it becomes more acceptable to you to give them the reins – temporarily.”

Basically, you have to figure out where and how to draw your line between work and family – and abide by it. You are determined and persistent and you can use those skills to make this happen.

GUIDELINES FOR STRIKING YOUR BALANCE:

1. Love what you do and do what you love.

When you're doing what you love, it rarely seems like work. You give 110 percent and it shows in the results. When you do things you don't really love, you take on stress that works against you. As an owner you can't really do only the things that you love, but you can make sure that you carve out time for the activities that give you joy and at which you excel – and delegate the activities that make you struggle.

2. Lose control to gain control.

Look at what dominates your time. Offload tasks that others in your organization can do at more cost efficient rates – and potentially even better – than you. This helps your gym to operate more cost effectively and helps you to “be the owner.” This won't come naturally to you since you typically want complete control. Use limited environments to “test” delegating until you're satisfied with the results and you can warm up to it. Then delegate everything that doesn't require your attention in a task-oriented way. Because you're still overseeing results, you're still in control and still engaged in the way your gym operates.

To successfully delegate:

- Document the process.
- Require consistent quality control reporting.
- Mentor those who you've tasked with new responsibilities.

You can now reserve your brainpower for the real nitty gritty stuff that will make a strategic difference in your gym.

Gymnastics facility owner and industry leader and speaker, Randall Sikora, notes what rises to the top as keys to his work/life balance adventure.

“Recruit high energy, achievement-minded people that compliment you. This way you can delegate everything you don't passionately enjoy doing to someone that thrives off completing those tasks. Your list of “to-dos” should be short, meaningful and impactful in driving your life in the direction that makes your soul sing”.

Delegation helps your employees to perform better with more confidence and less management and helps you become a better owner because you've managed to lift yourself up out of the weeds and look at the gym's long-term path.

3. Empower your employees.

Coaching and mentoring helps you empower your employees and establish your comfort level with delegating. Effective, consistent and ongoing coaching and mentoring improves staff engagement, leads to better knowledge transfer, helps with staff integration and improves learning and development in both directions.

Why coaching and mentoring? They aren't the same thing. They actually work in tandem.

Coaching is proactive, short-term and structured, and is focused on specific objectives related to work performance.

Mentoring is generally a reactive and ongoing process involving listening, advising and suggesting focused on employee development.

4. Set work/life boundaries and obey them.

Set real rules about your gym hours and what time you will close your home office. Establish how “accessible” you will be outside of those hours. Of course, there are exceptions, but the key is that they never become the rule. If you don't have “down time” you aren't as productive during “work time.” It may surprise you that you will find that you can decide when you will and you won't be engaged in work.

5. Don't overstretch your capacity.

When you're at capacity, say “no” to whatever will throw you and your gym out of kilter. If you can't see how you can do what you're considering well, don't. Overextending causes your core quality to suffer along with the quality of the extra activity that has pushed you there. Good reputations take a long time to build and a quick second to ruin, so wait to do whatever it is until the time is right.

6. Continue to learn through your mentors and peers.

Learning from others who have been in situations similar to yours is one of the most valuable experiences you can have. Use forums, events and professional organizations within or outside of your industry to learn from shared experiences.

Just because you are a mentor doesn't mean you can't have a mentor. Build a relationship with someone in or outside of your industry that has had successes similar to what you're seeking and understands your goals, challenges, strengths, weaknesses and stress points.

7. Work smarter, not harder.

Step back from what you're trying to accomplish to think outside the box and use new and innovative tools and technologies to make your gym better.

Technology and automation is plentiful and it can help your gym get more done in less time and greater accuracy without stressing your human resources. There are tools that can give you a view into your business so you can travel and stay in sync with your gym. You can be in sync without being engaged in tasks. Embrace what can help you be the best you can be.

8. Recharge the engine.

You need time to rejuvenate and generate energy to take on your next day. Really unplug on a consistent schedule that meets your needs. It is OK to have family and personal solitude and let someone else temporarily handle things. In your previous stressed and unbalanced life, you probably set unrealistic expectations by being too accessible – responding to non-emergency requests and questions during evenings or weekends. Continuing this behavior will only reinforce imbalance.

9. Have serious fun.

Enjoy a hobby. Carve out some “me” time that includes self-improvement and personal growth. Choose something that allows you to express yourself. However, make sure that these activities don't steal time from your family. Carving out this “time” will actually help you to grow personally and be a better spouse, parent, teacher, boss and business owner.

FOCUS OR REAL WORK WON'T GET DONE.

“Being at work” doesn't necessarily mean that work is actually “getting done”. Delegating what blurs your focus helps your gym by having highly skilled and committed people focused on what they do best. And it helps you to concentrate on what you should be doing.

Jacqueline Cornaby, life coach, founder of Jacqueline International, Inc., and Entrepreneurs' Organization speaker, shares her thoughts on work/life balance:

“Work/life balance is not a destination – it's a journey. In those moments where work or life seems overwhelming, remember to pause and take a breath. Make it a point to schedule mindful moments in your daily calendar and let your newfound balance become a model for your world, both in life and enterprise. At the end of the day, you have a choice: Make a living or design a life.”

Much of it comes down to offering the best of you to those around you – whether those people are employees, customers, friends or family. Rhee Gold, publisher of Dance Gym Life noted in a recent article entitled *Time vs. Money*, “Think of time as having value, and manage your time to maximize that value.” He cites a quote by M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*, and continues, “Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you won't do anything with it.”

A note from the author: Many entrepreneurs find peer support in achieving work-life balance during some “me” time through organizations such as EO (Entrepreneurs' Organization) of which I am a member as is Jacqueline Cornaby. Such support systems can help you put the guidelines that I've described to work in achieving your own work/life balance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR >> Mark's passion for solving business problems with technology led him to build a Software-as-a-Service company (Jackrabbit Technologies) to serve the needs of children's activity centers. Mark has been involved in organized youth sports since 1973 and in computer technology for 22 years. He has instructed and coached young athletes and owned sports facilities. Mark developed a class management system in the 80s and sold it to another company. The tremendous interest in the development of an online system by a large number of previous clients inspired Mark and his partner, Mike Carper, to cofound Jackrabbit which celebrated its 10th year of service to class-based businesses in 2014.