

EXERCISING  
YOUR TALENTS  
INTO ADDITIONAL  
SOURCES  
OF INCOME

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# Beyond THE FITNESS DOORS

For the fitness professional looking to add extra sources of income to this career path, opportunities exist that oftentimes go unexplored. P.L. Travers, famous for how her character Mary Poppins shares educational advice with children, wrote, "It's amazing what we can accomplish when we learn how to look beyond our own walls." These words bring wisdom—and financial opportunity—to today's fitness professional. The frequently unexplored areas for both **horizontal** and **vertical** career growth include guest teaching and training, providing continuing education, volunteering and writing.

**Horizontal Career Growth** occurs when you do exactly what you currently do, but in a different place, expanding your demographic. **Vertical Career Growth** happens when you amplify your job description to include additional skills, which can occur within and beyond the demographic you currently embrace.

## HORIZONTAL CAREER GROWTH

The first—and usually least daunting—example of how to expand your career is to not alter *what* you teach or train, only *where*. Consider continuing what you do with a change of scenery. Guest teaching at a resort or spa can expose your talents to a completely different culture or demographic. In these situations, the most common contractual arrangement involves a "fitness trade" in which you (and possibly a guest) fly to a destination, offer fitness services for 2 to 3 hours per day in exchange for accommodations, meals and spa services. You'll often find additional opportunities and work leads just from meeting people while exposing your talents to a wider audience beyond your daily grind.

Suzanne Hosley, Managing Director of Fitness Innovations Thailand (FIT) Ltd., recommends making additional income during vacations. "If you want to be traveling anyway," she says, "consider working with resorts, spas and hotels in vacation destinations to teach and maybe even develop wellness programs and retreats, incorporating nutrition,

exercise and stress management." Ultimately, the greater the variety of services you can offer a resort, the more likely companies will consider having you as a guest instructor or trainer. To explore such possibilities

- be sure your resumé highlights your versatility in terms of the populations you can train and the classes you can teach
- find a colleague in the spa industry who may be willing to do a trade. (They take your place while you visit theirs.)
- use [www.spafinder.com](http://www.spafinder.com) and [experienceispa.com](http://experienceispa.com) as places to begin research for resorts with well-established patterns of trade.

One final suggestion for expanding your services horizontally: ally yourself and your services with a charity that speaks to you. When you can create synergy between what you already do while amplifying the message of wellness, making the earth a better place, everyone wins. For example, offer a special event that most of your tribe would want to attend. You teach for free, but to access this event, participants have to bring canned goods, gently used winter coats, used shoes or children's toys. Invite the supported charity to come by at the end of class for the donations. While initially it appears that you are you doing your norm with the same people, a closer look reveals you are thinking beyond self-profit alone. Group pictures, comments, shares and tagging on social media will spread the message of your community outreach initiatives and, consequently, you will reap more press from a properly executed event than you could gain from your normal fitness class. Soon your tribe and the community will associate you with your philanthropic outreach.

## VERTICAL CAREER GROWTH

The following provide unique, and proven, ways to increase both your revenue and exposure as you consider adapting additional work avenues within the fitness world.



## coaching CLIENTS ONLINE

Online coaching can be a great way to expand our services beyond the four walls of our facility, reaching customers all over the world. “Most of our clients are busy people who could really use some extra help and motivation throughout the day,” says AFAA-certified instructor Noel Chelliah, founder of the DailyMuscle Transformation Bootcamp, based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. “The technology available to us today makes this easier. Without having to invest in any additional subscription-based software, I teach other [trainers] how to successfully use emails, Skype and Facebook Private Groups to provide daily motivation exclusively for online coaching clients.” Chelliah adds that social media also serves as the perfect platform for you to upload workouts, recipes, articles and videos for your clients’ reference. “We creatively and economically charge for those needed services,” he says.

Exercise physiologist and fitness consultant Fabio Comana is also a proponent of online coaching. The key to

your success in this arena, he says, lies in showing your clients the value of what you have to offer. First, though, you must learn what they value, need and want. “Take the time to ask, listen, understand,” says Comana, a faculty instructor for National Academy of Sports Medicine. Find out what their barriers to adherence are. Learn what they have found helpful in the past. “Once you fully understand [clients’] challenges, their ambivalence or resistance, what they desire to do or can do—then respond,” says Comana.

Another important factor, he adds, is to “empower them outside of their exercise hour.” The perceived value of your online coaching is directly related to the amount of time it impacts clients throughout the day. Comana likens it to owning a smartphone. If you used it only 10 minutes a day, it would hold little value. But using it 4 hours a day causes it to hold tremendous value. The more you can contribute to your clients’ success throughout the day—beyond your session in the gym—the greater your perceived value will become.

### GETTING STARTED

Here are a few steps Chelliah recommends for trainers and instructors who are ready to begin online coaching:

1. **Clients apply to join the program.** Chelliah requires a minimum 3-month commitment. He also explains clearly how much support he will provide, to prevent becoming overwhelmed with hourly messages, emails and calls.
2. **After signing up, clients take “before” photos** and record their starting weight and measurements. This will serve as a baseline to measure their progress.
3. **Each day, clients email you an update** of their activities and food intake.
4. **Each week, you email each client specific suggestions.** Progress and tweak their plan based on the client’s progress and adherence.
5. **At month’s end, bill your clients.** Chelliah uses PayPal, and he offers a money-back guarantee.

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### MENTORING AND COACHING

**Mentoring** occurs when one with experience, practical tips and wisdom shares this information with others. When finding a good fit with a mentoree, choose a compensation plan that provides a win-win situation. Consider these possibilities:

- a payment plan based on what the mentoree can afford without selling valuable insider information below its value.
- a trade of services for time spent together based on professional career or talents the mentoree has, such as massage, tax preparation or even meals.
- an internship program in which the mentoree shadows the mentor and assists with work tasks in exchange for the valuable hands-on experience, plus the additional live recognition the mentoree receives by being introduced and associated publicly with the mentor.

**Coaching** is another vertical growth opportunity. This can involve an individual interaction or interplay with a group or company. Understand that mentoring is relationship-oriented between the parties involved for a long-term commitment, while coaching is task oriented and performance driven, usually for a shorter term.

### FITNESS WRITING

In addition to mentoring and coaching, providing your opinion can build your tribe and be an extra income source. Chris Freytag, based in Minneapolis, works as a group fitness instructor and yoga teacher. As part of her vertical career growth, she founded Get Healthy U ([gethealthyu.com](http://gethealthyu.com)). She recommends making more money in fitness by blogging. “I started my website as a blog,” she shares, “and turned it into a content marketing site where I make money on advertising, affiliate programs and sponsored content. The key to starting a blog is to be consistent, authentic and responsive to your readers. Create connections and offer value to your community through online content.”

Ryan Halvorson works as an editor, freelance writer and group personal trainer in San Diego, and he recommends increasing your income by writing for fitness industry publications. Editors of such publications are always looking for unique ideas, concepts and stories, as well as qualified professionals to write about them. The best way to get started is to research digital or hard-copy publications that produce content that matches your expertise, and send article queries with your fresh ideas. Make sure you adhere to that publication’s query process—each will likely have specific requirements—which can usually be found on its website. It’s best to have some local writing experience under your belt before submitting a query, so be sure to get plenty of practice with a blog or client email newsletters. Research-based articles will meet with more success than blogs when submitted for industry professional magazines.

When preparing to write, consider these three questions to determine if your material is newsworthy:

1. Why this subject? 2. Why this author? 3. Why now?

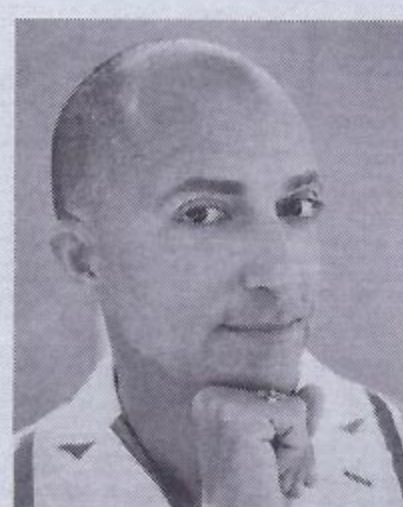
The first question ensures that the topic is of interest. The second makes you sell yourself as an expert on the subject. The third establishes that the time when the article comes out would be ideal for this topic.

### PROVIDING CONTINUING EDUCATION

Vertical expansion can include becoming involved in continuing education. Taking your message to other professionals may at first seem a daunting task, but once you find a particular talent in the fitness industry, that talent often comes with a responsibility to share. Start by teaching your fellow instructors and trainers, honing your message. Once comfortable, you can apply to spread your educational message by offering professional continuing education credits.

Veteran instructor and multiple award-winner Keli Roberts recommends this approach if it matches your style. Roberts, winner of the 2003 IDEA Group Fitness Instructor of the Year Award, works out of Pasadena, Calif., as a personal trainer, group fitness instructor, consultant and presenter. She says, “To become a master trainer, start by presenting for one of the many companies that offer opportunities for apprenticing to become a continuing education provider, such as BOSU®, Schwinn®, Tabata Bootcamp®, Barre Above™ and TRX®, just to name a few. Once you make more of a name for yourself offering their content, you can develop and start to offer your own content [with] something special to your unique talents that you bring to the industry.”

Having an established traditional fitness career can produce satisfactory results. However, for those who wish to expand their careers, both vertical and horizontal career expansion holds promise. Consider implementing some of the shared examples that match your personality, and let us know how they work for you! AF



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