

om websites and flyers to promotions and press releases, there are unlimited ways to raise your gym's profile and reach potential members. Mary Ferguson found out how operators can make the most of marketing and public relations



Amanda with Gareth

Celebrity link boosts Gareth's profile

Mary Ferguson

PERSONAL trainer has revealed how helping actress Amanda Holden complete the London Marathon boosted his profile at the same time. Gareth Traves is personal training manager with Motive8, based in West London, and helped the Britain's Got Talent judge become the fastest finishing female celebrity. Her training started in October, and Gareth has been mentioned in newspapers and news programmes as the idea followed her progress. He said: "Whenever a celebrity runs a marathon there is a lot of press interest and it was good for us as Amanda often referred the journalists to me, to clarify aspects of her training."

During the second month of the programme we found a dead body hanging from a tree whilst out running so that generated coverage for wrong reasons – but there was a lot of interest generally, as Amanda is judging on Britain's Got Talent at the time."

The actress – also famous for her role in Wild At Heart – built up to five marathons a week with Gareth, and still runs with him now.

He finished the race in a time of 4 hours 13mins, raising over £20,000 for the Born Free Foundation.

The first thing I do with any client is find out what they want to get from



Gareth Traves

the training. Amanda was concerned that she would be told what to do and that it would take over her life, so I made sure it was enjoyable and broken down into small goals.

"There were a couple of setbacks – including a trip to New York and a three-week illness – but she was very motivated so didn't need much pushing."

As well as personal training, Motive8 manages and maintains fitness sites, works with schools and designs and installs residential gyms – but Gareth said the personal training aspect has by far the highest profile.

He added: "It's always a bit difficult with the press as they tend to print what they want, but training high profile people is a good way to get your own name out there."

Other Motive8 clients include Sheila Hancock, the British Equestrian Team, and a number of TV presenters and actors.

Jane trades sessions for PR advice

By Mary Ferguson

A PERSONAL trainer in London has come up with a clever way to get reduced PR rates with an agency – and is enjoying a boost to business.

Jane Dowling runs a Power Plate studio in London Bridge but struggled for custom when it opened a year ago.

She signed up with Triggerfish Communications but explained she had a limited budget, so got a reduced fee in return for the employees of the company getting free power plate sessions.

She said: "I've been a personal trainer for 13 years and never had to worry about business as it all came to me by word of mouth and I have never had to advertise in my life. So when I opened the studio I naively expected business to come pouring in – but it didn't."

Feeling out of her depth when it came to PR and marketing, Jane contacted a number of agencies and found them all to be very expensive.

But when she explained the problem to Triggerfish, a contra-deal was agreed that suited everyone – Jane paid a reduced fee and the agency staff got to visit the studio for nothing.

The studio has received coverage in national consumer health magazines, local 'glossy' publications and newspapers, and business is picking up.

As well as Power Plate studio, Jane also runs bridal boot camps and mother and baby classes so has products that appeal to different types of



Jane Dowling

magazines.

She added: "I've worked with a lot of A-list celebrities which means nothing to me but the editors love it, and of course the Power Plates still have that celebrity association. PR is all about identifying your unique selling point and then telling people about it."

Communication concerns

THE leisure industry is not effective at communicating with customers, according to the results of a new study.

Research by MarketingUK asked marketing professionals from 1,000 companies what they thought of the industry's ability to communicate effectively through different channels, and more than half said it could do better.

Richard Higginbotham, head of marketing at CDMS – who commissioned the research – said: "The very nature of customer's fledgling commitment to going to the gym once they have made the investment, offers the marketer a chance to deliver opportune reminders via the medium the customer finds most helpful and unobtrusive.

"The transactional data provided by the leisure customer can generally prove to be informative lifestyle data. This means that multichannel marketing messages can be sent at rele-



Richard Higginbotham, head of marketing at CDMS

vant times with interesting and useful information, such as while the customer is on holiday or taking part in their sporting leisure pursuit."