

CLUB BUSINESS INTERMEDIATE



Sage Advice

“THOUGHT-LEADERSHIP STAR”
AMY MORIN EXPLORES THE “13 THINGS
MENTALLY STRONG PEOPLE *DON’T* DO”

Football Pro Scores Health Club Touchdown

Jason Reinhardt has gone the distance for Go M.A.D. Fitness

By Jennifer H. McInerney

Unlike many industry leaders, Jason Reinhardt never had any intention of pursuing a career in the health club business. “All my life, I wanted to be a professional football player,” he recalls. “I was training in the gym all the time, but it never crossed my mind to work in the fitness industry.”

In fact, Reinhardt’s introduction to the profession came about entirely by accident—as the result of a career-changing injury. In 1999, while playing semi-pro football for the Southern Michigan Timberwolves, he broke his scapula. As part of the recovery regimen, he rehabbed at Health South, which was located inside Q The Sports Club, in Arlington, Texas.

Greg Stover, the general manager at the time, urged Reinhardt to consider selling memberships for the club, since he was spending five hours at a time there anyway.

“After saying, ‘No, thanks’ a few times, I finally gave in and tried it,” says Reinhardt. “Sales is all about connecting with the person standing in front of you, finding out what they’re looking for, and, then, helping them find solutions. I was immediately hooked.”

It was the beginning of a long and ongoing career, intertwined, inextricably, with IHRSA-member clubs, their personnel, and the association’s various products and services, both in overt and intangible ways.

Once he’d recovered from his shoulder injury, Reinhardt continued to play football for another two years, working at Q The Sports Club during the off-season.

As his career unfolded and progressed, he held positions of increasing responsibility at other IHRSA facilities. He was a sales consultant at a Signature Athletic Club (now LA Fitness) in Texas; the sales manager of the Harbour Island Athletic Club in Tampa, Florida; the sales director for the Lifestyle Family Fitness (LFF) chain (now LA Fitness), then based in Tampa, and regional vice president of sales for its 10 clubs in Columbus, Ohio; and the vice president of sales for the Merritt Athletic Clubs, overseeing 10 of its sites in Baltimore, Maryland.

In 2009, his extensive and eclectic resume led him to become the vice president of sales for 25 Sport & Health facilities in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Maryland.

But all along, over the years, Reinhardt had entertained the notion, the dream, of one day opening his own club. In January 2013, when he and his wife decided to move, with their two young sons, back to his hometown of Monroe, Michigan, he realized the time had finally come.

“Throughout my career, I’ve had the good fortune to work with many successful people, many of whom I met through IHRSA, and I’ve learned a lot from them,” he says.

He’d not only learned about sales tactics, retention strategies, reinvestment philosophies, and the other topics that are addressed at IHRSA conventions. He’d also learned something about ambition, entrepreneurship, professionalism, and the success these qualities can bring.

A game of his own

Before moving to Monroe, Reinhardt contacted the owners of some of the local clubs to see if any of them were interested in selling. And, just five months later, he closed on a 17,000-square-



Owner Jason Reinhardt

foot facility. Wasting no time, he immediately embarked on renovations.

The result is Go M.A.D. Fitness—the acronym stands for Go Make A Difference—a 24-hour, full-service health club in Monroe. Among its many features and services are cardiovascular equipment, free weights, seven lines of circuit training equipment, Cardio Theater, a functional training studio, locker rooms with dry sauna, a smoothie bar with Wi-Fi, personal training, kids’ and seniors’ programming, M.A.D. Fit classes taught by a CrossFit Level 1 Coach, and 74 group fitness classes per month.

“It’s been rewarding to come back home and help make this community healthier,” he attests.

The Go M.A.D. moniker has a storied history that predates its current use as the name of a club company. Since his high school football days, Reinhardt has distinguished himself as a leader and motivator—someone who wants to make a difference, and pursues goals with determination.

During his four years at Northwood University (NU), in Midland, Michigan, his football teammates chose him as captain because of his drive and supportive nature. At the time, the team didn’t have a rallying cry, so Reinhardt introduced the notion of “Don’t just go through the motions—go make a difference!”

“That’s where Go M.A.D. was born,” he explains.

And the idea stuck. It’s now the team’s official motto, emblazoned in a place of honor above the players’ archway into the school’s football stadium.

“Go M.A.D. has been inspirational for me, because I wake up every morning wondering how I can make a difference, and go to sleep each night thinking about how I’ve managed to do so.”

Reinhardt maintained his “Go Make A Difference” spirit during his stints with professional teams in Michigan, Texas, and even Germany, where he spent eight months with the European World Football League. “Go M.A.D. has been inspirational for me, because I wake up every morning wondering how I can make a difference,” he reflects, “and go to sleep each night thinking about how I’ve managed to do so.”

Mark Fisher, the president and CEO of Sport & Health, recalls that Reinhardt “consistently embodied his Go M.A.D. philosophy” during the five years he served as the company’s vice president of sales. “Jason is very driven, and focused on what he wants



Go M.A.D. Fitness is committed to making Monroe, Michigan, healthier

to achieve, and what he’s willing to do to make it happen,” says Fisher. “He has a positive attitude and is excellent at inspiring others to put forth their personal best effort.”

And, now, Reinhardt is bringing Go M.A.D. to bear both on his business and on the industry at large. He plans to open five more Go M.A.D. Fitness locations over the next five years, and has given some serious thought to franchising. But he’s also putting his passion, expertise, and persuasiveness to work for others.

He’s delivered presentations at IHRSA’s Annual International Convention and Trade Show in 2012 and 2013, and served as a networking roundtable facilitator on “Sales Excellence” and as an “Ask an Industry Leader” panel participant, at this year’s event in San Diego. He’s also recorded two sales-oriented IHRSA Webinars, which can be accessed at the IHRSA Store via ihrsa.org/store.

“Jason is a great motivational speaker,” says Fisher.

IHRSA has been a constant, positive presence in Reinhardt’s career, and he hopes to be able to reciprocate appropriately, possibly by one day serving on the association’s board of directors. “IHRSA is a way to connect with the world,” he’s convinced. “It’s an organization that’s always moving onward and upward—never taking the easy way, but always choosing the right way to make a difference in the industry, worldwide.” —

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