



Copyright ©2023 Fitness Business Podcast. All rights reserved. This text may not be published online or distributed without written permission. Transcripts are generated using a combination of speech recognition software and human transcribers and may contain errors. Please check the corresponding audio before quoting in print.

Episode 490: Cameron Falloon: Building Community for Fitness Business Success Air Date: March 29, 2023

[TRANSCRIPT]

[0:00:06] (Dori Nugent): Building Community for Fitness business success is the key to longevity. Discover how simple fitness challenges social activities and modern day tech can be the glue to your community. My guest today is here to make your business better. Stay tuned for another amazing episode from the Fitness Business podcast. If this is your first time listening to the podcast, welcome. Did you know that we have a library of over 480 episodes with a wide variety of topics?

[0:00:45] (Dori Nugent): Those episodes can be found@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com if you're a regular listener. Thank you. I appreciate you coming back week after week. And finally, if you get any value from our shows, we are grateful in advance for you posting a review on itunes. I hope you're having a great day. Thank you so much for joining me today. I'm your host, Dori Nugent and today I invite Cameron Falun to sit down and talk with me.

[0:01:21] (Dori Nugent): Cam has built a very successful Australian fitness franchise. Body fit training. Since 2018, Body Fit Training, also known as

Bft, has taken the world by storm with partnering with Exponential Fitness. I will get started in just 1 minute. First, let's hear from our sponsor.

[0:01:42] (Dori Nugent): This podcast is brought to you by Hapana. Hapana is a cutting edge membership management solution prioritizing insane engagement. Hapana puts your brand first so you can facilitate deep, meaningful connections with clients and members to book, pay, consume content and build community. Hapana partners with fitness brands in both the boutique and big box segments that want to drive efficient operations and maximum engagement with clients and members.

[0:02:13] (Dori Nugent): And they do this by providing direct world class support with a passionate team who cares about your success. To see how you can transform your brand, go to Hapana.com and ask for a demonstration. Hapana Engineered for Engagement.

[0:02:31] (Dori Nugent): I love the Hapana family and I'm confident you will too. Take a minute to see how they will be a perfect fit for your club. Www.hepana.com get your pen ready now for.

[0:02:43] (Cameron Falloon): MyZone's Fitbispiration tam, I'd like to hear.

[0:02:47] (Dori Nugent): What your top three tips for building community to build retention?

[0:02:52] (Cameron Falloon): First of all, use your members names and it's really hard for all staff. You might have part time staff, but just encourage them to be vulnerable enough to walk up to someone in your studio or your gym and introduce themselves and say, I'm really sorry, I've forgotten your name. Your members will love that. It's personable. You're showing some vulnerability, so that goes a long way. So we have an obligation. Know your members, know their names and greet them upon arrival and also when they're leaving.

[0:03:18] (Cameron Falloon): The other one is set a goal. I touched on this through the podcast. Just set a goal for your staff and your team to have a certain amount of touch points with every member for every visit that they have. That could be one, it could be two, it could be five. Obviously don't go over the top and drown them in touch points. And again, work on those touch points so they're not always critical on a technique. It could just be, geez, you look fantastic today.

[0:03:42] (Cameron Falloon): You're having a good day? That's a touch point. And I think the third one would be so many things in our businesses are automated. Just make the time to have a personal, unautomated, if that's even a word, point of contact with a member. So it might be that, you know, a favorite sporting team of a member and you knew they played on the weekend, had a great result. Send Cam a text message and say, oh, Cam, I see the Buffaloes get up on the weekend. Congratulations. You must be pumped. I know as a member, that's not an automated message. I know that you've taken time to send me that message. It's personal. It's about me.

[0:04:19] (Cameron Falloon): You know, something about my life. So do something that's not automated, something that's really personal. Every now and again is a touch point with your members because it goes a long, long way in a world of where everything's just automated and lacks personalization.

[0:04:33] (Dori Nugent): Philanthropist and entrepreneur Anne Mallum comes to the show next week. You might recognize her name because she is the founder and former CEO of Back On My Feet, a national nonprofit that uses running to help those experiences homelessness to change the way they see themselves. Anne is also the founder of Solid Core, a very successful boutique fitness company with more than 85 locations. Plus, she is the founder and CEO of Ambition Now. Talk about ambition.

[0:05:08] (Dori Nugent): She is one ambitious entrepreneur. After Cam's interview, I'll introduce you to Anne and you'll hear why you won't want to

miss her interview. Professional facilitation with a group of non competing owners. To stay ahead of the industry curve is the USP of Rex Roundtables. To find your local roundtable, go to [rexroundtables.com](https://www.rexroundtables.com). That's [Rexroundtables.com](https://www.rexroundtables.com). It's time to transition into this week's interview with Cameron Falloon fitness Business Podcast. Family, put your hands together for the founder of Body Fit Training, cam Balloon. Kim, thank you so much for coming on to the Fitness business podcast.

[0:05:50] (Cameron Falloon): Thanks dory. Great to be here.

[0:05:52] (Dori Nugent): So you are the founder of Body Fit Training. You also call it Bft. So for all of our listeners out there, if they hear Bft, Body Fit Training and right now you currently have 250 open locations.

[0:06:07] (Cameron Falloon): That's correct. Yeah, we're operating in six countries and really look forward. We've sold over 550 globally, and we're looking forward to a really big 2023 of studio openings around the world. So it's a really exciting time in our growth.

[0:06:21] (Dori Nugent): That is exciting. And also, on your resume, I see that you were the strengths and conditioning coach for various international soccer teams and AFL teams.

[0:06:30] (Cameron Falloon): Yeah, that's correct. And I think that's what Body Fit Training is built off is a methodology that was afforded to, or is afforded to elite athletes and trying to use that exercise prescription methodology and the scientific principles behind that and just making it accessible for the everyday weekend warrior. So that's 15 years of experience working with athletes built into Bft.

[0:06:52] (Dori Nugent): Well, Bft is certainly up and running. You mentioned that there's one actually near me, so I'm going to have to take a little drive down south and go check it out, as I have not been there yet, but I promise I'll get down there and check it out. But what's unique about body Fit training is you really focus on community. And I'd like to know why, when you kind of focused on that, when putting your

business model together, why you felt it was so important to build community within your fitness business.

[0:07:24] (Cameron Falloon): Yeah, I think again, much like team sports, which where I've spent most of my time working with athletes, is it's a community. You can be a coach or a player that comes from another state or country, and once you walk in the doors of that organization, you're instantly a part of a family. And there's relationships and bonds that are built for life and connections that are made. And it's really powerful. And when I was doing research, coming out of elite sport and looking at the commercial space, there's a lot of issues with our industry. There's so many people doing great things, but we're also failing at so many things, and one of them is engagement and keeping people come back. And I think it's around messaging that we as an industry broadly, there's just constantly messages around extreme weight loss and take this powder or this pill.

[0:08:12] (Cameron Falloon): A lot of people aren't motivated to exercise, those that are actually the minority. So what are we doing to make it fun for people? What are we doing to make them want to come back? And if we can do those things outside of the exercise, if we can make a community, make human connections, make it fun for them, and they do keep coming back, then that's when the exercise can really have its benefits. Because as we know, exercise is something that's weight loss or building muscle, that takes time and it's a journey and it should be a lifelong journey, much like the development of an athlete. So making those human connections is really important in building community to get people coming back. And we're really proud that at Bft we've got over 50,000 members and they average 4.7

[0:08:56] (Cameron Falloon): visitations a week across the 50,000 members. So we're constantly striving to keep building on that. We love them. Five times a week is amazing. And if we're doing that, we're going a long way to solving part of the problem in the industry.

[0:09:11] (Dori Nugent): While quite impressive on those stats here with your number of visits per person, very nice in order to have fitness business success, in your opinion, is community more important for driving referral, sales or retention? Or would you say it's equal?

[0:09:29] (Cameron Falloon): Look I think it's equally important and I'm not sure you really focus the lens on either one of those too narrowly, because it's important to both. I think in the early stages of your business, it's obviously really important for sales, because people can feel that when they come into a new business, if you're just launching a studio, they can feel if there's a really good community and a good energy in the space. So that helps to sell.

[0:09:53] (Cameron Falloon): But obviously ongoing, if people are feeling attached to the place, they've got relationships and connections. Your biggest source of membership once you're an established business is going to come from referrals. And so if you can keep people for longer, then that will lead to more referrals. So it becomes you're decreasing your cost per acquisition in your business. So that's an efficiency that you can create.

[0:10:16] (Cameron Falloon): You're also retaining your members for longer, so then your lifetime value of that membership is going to go up. So there's multiple benefits to doing it. And the beauty of it is dory is that it's really simple. It's getting to know your members, it's giving them love, it's actually coaching them when they're in a session. To be honest, this is not earth shattering and rocket science. Again, it's going back to athletes. That what they do is they do the basics and they do the basics consistently really well.

[0:10:44] (Cameron Falloon): And I think as an industry, if we can get back to that, that's going to go a long way to building retention, increasing your sales and having great businesses across the board.

[0:10:54] (Dori Nugent): You mentioned earlier that you said average member about 4.5 visits per week. How are you doing that? How are you keeping your members engaged?

[0:11:08] (Cameron Falloon): Yeah, we do it through multiple means. So as a franchise, or I guess our responsibility is to educate our franchisees and their staff, their trainers and managers, and give them the tools to be successful. But we do it through human interaction and connections as well as technology. So we've built our own heart rate system called Bft Cubed, where it's a world first, where each of our unique 13 programs gets rewarded differently based on the outcome of that session. So in most studios, as an example, heart rate gamification rewards.

[0:11:41] (Cameron Falloon): The harder you train, the more you get rewarded. But if you're not a fit member or you're deconditioned or you're overweight, you have an injury, then that's very demotivating. Also, in a strength training session where you are lifting heavy weights, but you might only be doing three repetitions, your heart rate won't elevate very high because you're not under tension for long enough, so you don't get rewarded for that. So I was looking at it saying, well, there's lots of great systems out there, but why aren't we building a system and utilizing technology to reward all types of training, strength training, high intensity, low intensity. So we went and build our own system so that's a very big part of our engagement. And then it's the real basics, as I said. It's knowing the member's name, it's knowing their key milestones in their life, whether it's a birthday or it's an anniversary or they're getting married or they've had a birth of a child.

[0:12:33] (Cameron Falloon): It's knowing what they do for work. It's being able to recognize when they walk in the front door based on their mood and how they're talking and their expressions. Is today a day that I can push dory because I can see that she's up and about and she's energetic? Or is today a day I need to actually pick her up and just make her feel special today and just get her through the session because she's walked in the door, and that's probably for her mood today. That's probably a great achievement. So we're in the people business, and I

think that gets lost in all the sales and marketing and everything else. We are in the people business in this industry. So get to know your people really well, love them, and if you can do that, honestly, most of what we do actually isn't about the training.

[0:13:15] (Cameron Falloon): So engage your members, get to know them, love them, and then if they're coming back, absolutely give them the best on the floor and coach them. And we have goals with our studios where we might say, okay, we want every trainer to have four interactions with every member. So if you think about that, you're one member, there's three trainers on the floor. Theoretically, you should have twelve touch points in a 50 minutes class at Bft.

[0:13:40] (Cameron Falloon): And if we're doing that, then you're getting and feeling a lot of love and attention, and that could just be fantastic. Dory you're moving really well. Keep going. It doesn't have to be we're not over coaching people. We're not trying to tell them what they're doing wrong all the time, which is a bit of a symptom in our industry. Change your technique, you're doing this wrong. It could just be you're moving fantastic today. Keep going.

[0:14:01] (Cameron Falloon): Looking good. Yeah, great to see you've upped your weight today, or whatever it might be. But have twelve positive interactions, or sorry, set a goal to have a number of positive interactions with every member every session. As a KPI in your business, I.

[0:14:16] (Dori Nugent): Like that you're mindful about how the touch point needs to be because you have the introvert, the classic introvert in the class. Their worst fear is that you're really calling them out or calling on them, even if you, as the instructor, think you're trying to be a cheerleader for them. For them, that's very embarrassing. So I like the fact that you're like, hey, we don't always need to be right in our face. We can just be like, hey, doing a great job today. Dory and moving on. I like that.

[0:14:46] (Cameron Falloon): And that's knowing your members and their personalities. And again, it's a bit easier in working with team athletes in elite sport because you psychologically profile people. We would learn as coaches our own personalities and how we convey information and communicate so that we could adjust that based on personality types. You don't necessarily have that available for several hundred members, but if you take an interest in your members and get to know their triggers, you can do it. It takes time and it is a skill. But that's the level of, I think, personalization or hyper personalization. I think we need in gyms and in studios and PT studios and so on to really engage our members and connect with them.

[0:15:29] (Dori Nugent): Yeah, I liked how you said earlier that we are in the people business. Sometimes I feel like there's always this push and pull back and forth between people business and the service industry business. So I appreciate that you're like, hey, we're in the people business. And then secondary, you've got the service industry. When we talk about the people business, let's talk about fitness challenges and social activities that play in building a community.

[0:16:00] (Dori Nugent): What can you tell us about Bft and how you work the fitness challenges and the social activities?

[0:16:08] (Cameron Falloon): Yeah, that's a really good question. And we constantly take member feedback as well as franchisee feedback to, I guess, to stay really close to it and understand how our members are feeling about what we're doing and then taking on board changes that we can make going forward based on their feedback. We do two distinct types of challenges. I guess we do an eight week challenge, which is around body composition, but primarily it's around maintaining lean muscle mass but losing body fat. So it's not a weight loss.

[0:16:37] (Cameron Falloon): It's distinct from a weight loss course. So you don't have to lose weight, but we want you to maintain your muscle mass and lose body fat. And then we do a weight strength training challenge called the Benchmark Challenge. So we find them really

complementary and empowering, and they both have different ways of engaging with members. But what we're giving members is an opportunity to engage in one of either of those whichever you feel best suits you, or what goals you want to achieve, or you can do both.

[0:17:07] (Cameron Falloon): We find that strength training is extremely empowering to people because we focus on three lifts. The cycle of our training, our eight week program will be designed to everything in that program is designed to them to be able to get results in those three lifts. And then we have a testing day. So we get everyone together and people are helping each other and motivating each other and seeing each other lift and achieve personal bests and goals. And that in itself is really empowering. It's empowering for the members, those that are achieving things. It's empowering for the people who are supporting and cheering and clapping.

[0:17:42] (Cameron Falloon): So that's a fantastic tool, and it's tangible because it's objective measures it's. You're lifting heavier weight, or you're doing more repetitions on a certain weight. Or if it's body composition, it's an objective measure, with you've reduced visceral fat, so you might not have lost much body fat. You may not have lost weight, but you may have lost visceral fat. So fat around your organs, which is extremely beneficial. So we try and focus on really positive outcomes for people's lifestyle versus extreme outcomes, like just losing ten kilos in eight weeks, because I actually philosophically don't think that's healthy.

[0:18:19] (Cameron Falloon): And if we can educate the members around that and empower them with a little bit of knowledge that they become a little bit more self sufficient in their own training or their lifestyle management through diet or hydration or other things, we find that a brilliant way to engage people, open up conversations. And then along with each of those challenges, there's always come on a Sunday and we'll go and hike up a mountain or we'll go and swim at a lake or something like that. So it's building in those out of studio activities where you're having different types of conversations, it's not about the training

or it's not about the nutrition or it's not about a heart rate. It's just we're going for a walk to the upper mountain and we're just going to talk about life and enjoy the outdoors. And those things are really beneficial and we really encourage those as part of our challenges. And both the eight week challenge and.

[0:19:06] (Dori Nugent): The benchmark challenge, I feel that there are some clubs since COVID that have truly, truly capitalized on the social activities aspect of creating community in their club. I feel like after COVID, I don't want to say we, I mean, in myself, but as business owners, gym owners, they had to sometimes teach people how to be social again. And the gym, for many people, it's a safe place for them. So creating these social activities, I think just there's just a no brainer about retention, helping your retention. So I like the fact that you said, hey, we're doing fitness, but not necessarily fitness, social activities. You're getting outside of the club and doing a hike or if you're kayaking, things like that.

[0:19:54] (Dori Nugent): I really like that. I think that's a great idea.

[0:19:56] (Cameron Falloon): I think it's important to be mindful of we talked about the introvert member or the member who's maybe just built up the courage to step foot into a studio but still isn't embedded in that community. That may be kind of like, I don't know whether the fitness is for me or this environment is for me, to make sure that as a manager or a trainer or someone, that if you're doing these activities that you're engaging everyone and you're understanding where they are on their journey. So it might be cam has only been a member for two weeks and we know he's a bit of an introvert call Cam, because he's not going to respond to the SMS message or the WhatsApp message or the Facebook message, because that's not his personality. So call him and say, hey, you've been here for two weeks, been fantastic, you're doing really well. We'd love for you to come this weekend. I'm feeling pretty good about myself right now.

[0:20:44] (Cameron Falloon): Now, you can't do that for everyone. But again, it just goes back to know your members and really make an effort to engage in them because it'll pay you back in spades.

[0:20:52] (Dori Nugent): Yeah, I like how you keep emphasizing know your members. I like that. All right, let's kind of flip the coin here and let's talk about the tech side of things. Can you build a community through tech? And why or why not?

[0:21:08] (Cameron Falloon): I will say you can, but not tech exclusively. I'll keep going back to we're in the people business, and you touched on post COVID, just the need for humans to connect. So it's a fantastic engagement tool utilizing good technology. As I said, we build our own system. We build a system to do a couple of things. One is to help coaches to have connections and to open up conversations with members around their training.

[0:21:33] (Cameron Falloon): Two, it's to help the members to get rewarded so for every style of training, but also, if they're missing a target, to open up a conversation on what are the opportunities to maximize their time in the studio to get that result. So often the figures that we get through tech and through gamification are just an arbitrary number, but it doesn't actually go back to a performance goal or improving. It's just a number.

[0:21:58] (Cameron Falloon): So we try and always go back to, is the member improving? How are we personalizing that? So, for me, it's a combination of utilizing technology, but then giving the humans the tools to effectively utilize that. An example I'll give you is I had a Garmin watch and heart rate monitor and I know a lot of people use that or they use aura rings and so on and so forth and talked about I did. A lot of mountain biking and road cycling. And I was during a phase where I was doing four or 500 week on the bike, and it kept saying to me, Cameron Unit, you're cooked. Basically, you need to recover.

[0:22:33] (Cameron Falloon): But I'm looking at my training loads, and I know my body and technology is getting better, but it's an arbitrary figure. I kept training through that. So I said, you need to rest for 24 hours. And it was 36 hours, and it was 48 hours, and it was 72 hours I needed to rest and I kept training and I was fine. My resting heart rate was fine. So what is it and how are we utilizing the technology? So is the technology you're using validated?

[0:22:59] (Cameron Falloon): Has it been thoroughly tested? Is it personable? And then how much data and what data are you giving to the end user? For it to be meaningful, because there's lots of information out there. How do we use it? How are we getting educated on how to use it? How are we actually using that information to make changes in our lifestyle or dietary habits or exercise and training habits? And so it's a combination of both. I think technology has got a huge place, and I think in the next five to ten years, it's really going to ramp up in the industry.

[0:23:33] (Cameron Falloon): At the moment, though, it's still a little bit crude, so to speak, and there's a little bit of work to be done. And so I'll just say to people, use tech. Don't lose a human element, but also validate your technology and don't overload your members with it. Give them basic, simple, meaningful information.

[0:23:58] (Dori Nugent): Thank you for taking time out of your day to share your knowledge with our Fbp family. I posted cam's contact info in our show notes. Reach out and let Cam know you enjoyed his episode. Our Show Notes can be found@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com, and while you're there, hit that subscribe button so the Show Notes will be sent to you each and every week. Coming up next, Anne Mallum, the founder of the successful boutique franchise solid Core and Ambition.

[0:24:28] (Justin Tamsett): G'day. It's JT here, and I was talking to Blair McKinney, the CEO of one of our sponsors, MX Metrics, the other day, and I gave him a hard time about his company's tagline defeating Mediocrity. By definition, that means he's excluding the majority of the

market, but Blair just wouldn't budge. He only wants to work with operators who want to punch Mediocrity in the face, really smash it. So I've talked to a few of his customers, like Joe Shirelli from Gainesville Health and Fitness, and, yeah, it's for real.

[0:25:01] (Justin Tamsett): While Joe is a nice guy, he isn't satisfied with Mediocrity either. He's crushing it as well. So I'm still dubious about selling only to operators who want to defeat Mediocrity. But if this resonates with you, I reckon you should check them out. Go to [Mxmetrics.com](https://www.mxmetrics.com). But remember, only if you're interested in smashing Mediocrity.

[0:25:26] (Cameron Falloon): Quickfire five, sponsored by Hapana.

[0:25:30] (Dori Nugent): Let's take a few minutes to learn a couple things about my upcoming guest, Anne Mallum. Anne, it is time for our Quick Fire five questions. Ready?

[0:25:39] (Anne Mahlum): I'm ready.

[0:25:41] (Dori Nugent): Okay, I want you to tell us, what is one of your guilty pleasures? Okay.

[0:25:48] (Anne Mahlum): My guilty pleasure. Well, it used to be tequila, but I quit drinking this year, so that's not what it is anymore. I think French fries probably takes the cake. Now it replaces the tequila.

[0:26:03] (Dori Nugent): Okay. That's a good swap. Yeah.

[0:26:06] (Anne Mahlum): All right.

[0:26:06] (Dori Nugent): How about a habit or an action that you do to help you be productive?

[0:26:13] (Anne Mahlum): Oh, it's the morning. I know that's what everybody says, but it's really true. I feel like if you start your day early and in the morning and start doing quality work, whether it's a workout

rate to work some quality decision. It just feeds and it has a domino effect into the rest of your day. So I'm up early.

[0:26:33] (Dori Nugent): Perfect. And I'm really curious to hear what is an activity that you do that calms you.

[0:26:41] (Anne Mahlum): I'm not a very stressed person, which I think surprises people. So the calming, I think just at night I have no problem turning everything off and going to bed. So I think I've programmed myself to be like, that's it. The day is over, my productivity is done and it's now time to transition. And I think I've just gotten really good at that and can go to sleep pretty quickly.

[0:27:03] (Dori Nugent): Yeah, I can relate to that. My husband is the exact opposite and he gets so mad at me because he's like, you're sleeping like a baby. The world could be falling apart and you're sleeping like a baby. And I'm over here stressing and fretting and I'm like, don't know what this.

[0:27:19] (Anne Mahlum): If I don't sleep and get 8 hours, I'm just not my best. So I just know whatever's going on, it's going to have to exist without me for these next 8 hours so that I can show up the next day and contribute. I agree.

[0:27:32] (Dori Nugent): Not much that can be resolved at 02:00 A.m.. That's right. Okay, here's a good one. Please recommend a book to our SVP family.

[0:27:41] (Anne Mahlum): So, one of the books that I have read a few times, I'm going to do two, which I'm already breaking rules, which is very apropos for an entrepreneur. So one is the subtle art of not giving an F. I'll say, I don't know if I can swear on your podcast. It's by Mark Manson. I just think that book around identity and limiting beliefs is so unbelievable. And then the second one is how to Win Friends and Influence People, which is Dale Carnegie, such an old one.

[0:28:07] (Anne Mahlum): But it's all just about how to treat people and what works and what makes people feel good. And I think there's a lot of that missing in business.

[0:28:16] (Dori Nugent): Classic book. Love it. One of my favorites as well. So great recommendation. All right, here we go. Anne, I'm going to turn the mic over to you in 30 seconds to pitch your episode next week.

[0:28:29] (Anne Mahlum): Well, we haven't started this yet, but I am a pretty direct person and I don't sugarcoat things and I usually give my opinion regardless of what people think of it. I have built a very successful boutique fitness concept and scaled it to 90 studios in less than nine years. So I think I have a thing or two to help people with if they're on a similar trajectory and really want to grow their business in the space.

[0:28:57] (Dori Nugent): Perfect fbp family. Please join us next week as Anne Mallum joins us and her topic is 2023, the Fitness Forecast. Anne is the perfect industry expert for the Fitness Business podcast. She leads with a great pulse on this. Boutique Market and Views 2023 with fresh vision and Mindset boutique owners. She's going to help you grow your business. I wouldn't want you to miss the show. Therefore, by subscribing to the podcast, you'll never miss a show.

[0:29:38] (Dori Nugent): Subscribe@fitnessbusinesspodcast.com. It's time to hand out a few thank yous. First, I'd like to thank our founding partner, active Management. Our partners myzone Issa bodymap and Hapana, as well as our Advertisers Rex, Roundtables and MX metrics. We believe what you leave behind is not what's engraved in stone monuments, but woven into the lives of others.

END OF EPISODE