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A good cause that's good for business

If you are aligning your facility with a charity, not only will you be supporting a worthy cause, you could also be setting your business apart from the competition.

There are an endless number of causes that you can support; however, World Osteoporosis Day is a logical charity to align yourself with because exercise is a proven method of helping to prevent osteoporosis and achieve optimal bone health; so the cause itself is great for encouraging people into your facility.

The aims of Osteoporosis Australia and the fitness industry share a natural symbiosis, i.e. to encourage more people to undertake weight bearing activities. The following ideas could apply to any charity event you align your business with, but for the purpose of this article we have used World Osteoporosis Day.

The community event: World Osteoporosis Day on 20 October 2006.

The purpose of your facility's event: To raise funds for Osteoporosis Australia, with a side benefit being that people are drawn to your facility to gain some education about osteoporosis and benefits of exercise.

The target audience: Those in your local community who may currently be at risk or suffering from osteoporosis; those who are affected by, or know of, someone who has osteoporosis; and those who wish to maintain healthy bones and prevent the onset of osteoporosis.

Your facility's event: 'Workout For Your Bones' could be the theme for the entire week where World Osteoporosis Day falls. Ask participants of all activities for a gold coin donation (given to Osteoporosis Australia) to attend, and have official Osteoporosis Australia merchandise and Bone Pins on sale (\$2 each, supplied by Osteoporosis Australia). Some activities may be direct fundraising strategies, while others help increase awareness of the disease, Osteoporosis Australia and the role your facility can play in helping to prevent and treat the condition. Your facility could:

- Hold a morning/afternoon tea containing calcium enriched foods (e.g., dairy products) to promote nutrition that enhances bone health. You could ask a local supermarket to donate the products and then provide them with signage in the centre in exchange. For the classes that have regular and passionate participants (e.g., aqua classes), your participants might even volunteer to bring/bake/make their favourite food for bone health!
- Invite a local osteopath to consult with members about bone health and/or conduct basic risk assessments within your centre on your members. Consider ongoing promotion of their services to your members in exchange for them donating a few hours of their time to be onsite.
- Give away mini tubs of yoghurt, milk or cheese to remind people that calcium, along with exercise, is needed to retain bone health. Ask a supplier to donate the goods in exchange for promotion in your member newsletter.
- Hold a seminar about weight training, bone health and osteoporosis for your members and interested parties from the local community. Ask people to pay \$5 (part or all of which you could donate to Osteoporosis Australia), and give an official Osteoporosis Australia Bone Pin to each attendee.
- Feature osteoporosis, the treatment (including information about the benefits of strength training), the causes, the prevention strategies, and promotion for

Osteoporosis Australia Bone Pins in your member newsletter and on your web site.

- Make information leaflets available throughout the facility for members to take home. You can obtain these for free from Osteoporosis Australia as well as using the Information Handout from page 12 of this publication.
- Educate people at your local shopping centre about the importance of exercise for optimal bone health. Distribute the Osteoporosis Australia information leaflets, attached to club specific information.
- Work with local schools to help promote bone health and exercise.
- Provide discounted personal training sessions that focus on weight bearing exercise to help promote optimal bone health (these could of course lead to further fully paid sessions being booked). Members might pay \$10 and receive a 'Workout For Your Bones' program and a Bone Pin, with part of the fee going to Osteoporosis Australia.
- Turn some of your group exercise sessions that incorporate weights into specific 'Workout For Your Bones' classes. Instructors can give participants snippets of information throughout the class about bone health, distribute information leaflets and sell Osteoporosis Australia's Bone Pins at the end of the class.
- On the weekend following Osteoporosis Day, you could run a health expo (formerly called 'an open day') to educate the local community about osteoporosis and its causes, prevention strategies, support resources and treatment, with a number of the above ideas occurring throughout that weekend.
- Offer a special 'Workout for Your Bones' membership package for a limited time. These new members could each be given an Osteoporosis Australia bone pin, with the \$2 price factored into the package.

The promotion of your event: To be successful, you need to promote the community event (i.e., World Osteoporosis Day) and the fact your facility is raising funds to support it. There are a number of ways in which you can let your local community know what you are doing. Here are just some of the proven methods:

- Undertake a letterbox drop informing local residents of exactly what you are doing and the activities that are available to them.
- E-mail your database contacts some facts about osteoporosis and tie it into your special 'Workout for Your Bones' membership package.
- Promote your event in your member newsletters and on your member noticeboards.
- Have fliers available throughout the facility promoting the schedule of activities you are providing during that week.
- Provide local newspapers with editorials about osteoporosis and the benefits of weight training, then tie in the fact that your facility is fundraising to support the cause.
- Contact your local radio station and see if you can discuss on air, osteoporosis and the role of exercise, and tie in the activities you are running to support fundraising.
- Alert your local media to World Osteoporosis Day and provide a full schedule of activities that your facility is running to raise funds for the cause.

Active Management has put together a range of resources that are tailored to your facility, to help you promote your World Osteoporosis Day activities. And remember, as a Club Network member, you receive \$60 off every month, from any Active Management purchase, as part of the Club Solutions Network program. Contact Justin Tamsett on jt@activemgmt.com.au or phone 02 9980 9089 for more details.

Osteoporosis Australia can provide your facility with free resources for you to use on the day of your event, and during that week of promotion. They can provide you with official merchandise, which you can sell to your members and visitors, information leaflets containing the facts about osteoporosis, and posters advertising World Osteoporosis Day. These resources can be obtained at no cost from Osteoporosis Australia and will help you raise funds for the cause throughout that particular week. Contact Maria Chilcott at Osteoporosis Australia by e-mail at mchilcott@osteoporosis.org.au or phone 02 9518 8140. ♦



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