

Portugal: Separate nutrition and fitness contracts

Gyms in Portugal are beginning to separate nutrition services from their fitness offering in order to counter the issue of rising VAT.

In 2011, VAT on physical activity rose from 6 to 23 per cent. However, nutrition as a standalone offering currently incurs zero VAT. Health clubs are therefore increasingly developing distinct services, prompting the Portuguese association AGAP to seek legal guidance about this practice.

AGAP's current standpoint is that independent contracts are required for each service – fitness and nutrition – and that nutrition services must be carried out by registered, licensed professionals. However, it has a concern that retention levels may be impacted if nutrition is removed from the fitness membership package.

New opening for Indigo boutique hotel brand

Hotel Indigo, the boutique brand in the IHG portfolio, opened its latest property – in Wanchai, Hong Kong – on 1 April.

The hotel includes a small, guest-only gym kitted out by Star Trac. It's the third Indigo site in Asia, after Shanghai and Xiamen, to install Star Trac equipment.

Cycling-yoga offering launches in New York

Synstudio has opened in Brooklyn, New York, claiming to be the first boutique fitness brand in the city to host cycling and yoga classes under one roof.

The two activities are offered as distinct sessions, not combined classes, with day passes available for US\$25. In the cycling classes, participants stand out of their saddles the whole time, moving to the music with a dance influence.

Synstudio launched in April 2010 and has two clubs in Durham, North Carolina, with plans for further Manhattan sites.

GymAround: Expansion and evolution

Orange Fitness (Russia), Club Med Gym (Paris) and Club One (US), are among the recent sign-ups to GymAround – the network that gives business travellers access to gyms around the world. Clubs can join the network for free, with payment now made in person at the club – discounted for those with GymAround vouchers.

Trainmore opens two new sites

Dutch operator TrainMore opened two new clubs last month – one acquisition and one new gym.

Fresh Zaandam, a 1,200sq m gym in the centre of Zaandam, re-opened as a TrainMore club on 23 April, while the

1,300sq m new club opened in the centre of The Hague on 29 April. Both fitness centres are located in historic buildings.

Facilities include fitness suites equipped by Technogym, group exercise studios, group cycling, sauna and bar.

The new club in The Hague is the first site to introduce TrainMore's new workout experience, creating distinct areas for activities such as boxing and TRX. The boxing area is brought to life with boxing videos to inspire people, while the wallpaper has been specially designed featuring old boxing matches, giving the feel of a traditional boxing gym. There is also a MoreSteel area for old-school power training, with a steel and concrete-wall design.

TrainMore was set up with the aim of motivating people to work out more often, with a sliding scale of charges based on usage levels. If people visit the gym three times a week, they pay only €1.95 a week; two add-ons such as sunbeds and health drinks means membership is free. When people work out twice a week, they pay €4.95 – a 50 per cent discount.



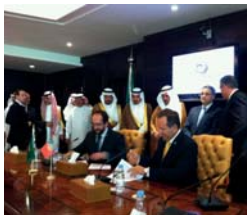
TrainMore has a sliding fee scale based on usage

Vivafit signs deals for Bahrain and Qatar

Women-only gym franchise Vivafit has signed two new master franchise contracts – its seventh and eighth – for Qatar and Bahrain.

The master franchise partner for Qatar is the company The Forum, represented by its founder and general manager Bassem Othman Rajab Majeed. The Forum operates in Qatar and in Dubai, specialising in engineering, franchising, beauty salons and now fitness.

Master franchisee for Bahrain is Portuguese businessman Joao Moedas, the co-founder of two other businesses: an advertising agency in Bahrain and a recruitment agency in Saudi Arabia that specialises in women.



Signing of the master franchise deal for Bahrain

énergie: First Fit4Less to open in Ireland

The énergie Group is opening its first Fit4Less club – the franchise operator's low-cost offering – in the Republic of Ireland this month.

Located in Tallaght – a suburb of Dublin with a population of 750,000 – the club currently measures 745sq m, to be extended to 1,115–1,400sq m to meet demand. It's owned by franchisees Greg Kenny and Shane Lynch: Kenny is a former track athlete, while Lynch is nine-time world kickboxing champion.

The gym will be kitted out by Precor, alongside functional training zones. Studios will follow in the autumn of 2013 – or before then if demand dictates.

Plans are to roll out 10 Fit4Less clubs in Leinster, the most populated province in the Republic, within two years, with further plans for the rest of Ireland to follow. énergie already has two Fit4Less clubs in Northern Ireland.

With this new club, énergie operates 14 clubs across Ireland: eight énergie Fitness Clubs, the full fitness format with swimming pools, extensive gyms, studios and ancillary facilities; three énergie fitness for women; and three Fit4Less clubs. This makes the franchise operator the largest provider of health and fitness facilities in the country, according to master franchisee Jim Durie.