

RIDE ON



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SPACE CYCLE FOUNDER MATTHEW ALLISON

ON PLANS TO TAKE THE BRAND
ACROSS CHINA — AND BEYOND

SEE THE LIGHT AT FIRSTLIGHT LONDON

THE FUTURE OF INDOOR CYCLING

... IS DIGITAL, SAYS WEXER'S
PAUL BOWMAN

THE SPORT OF INDOOR CYCLING

INDOOR CYCLING IS FAR MORE THAN
JUST EXERCISE, SAYS KINOMAP'S CEO

THE ONLINE MAGAZINE FOR ALL INDOOR CYCLING LOVERS



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Photography by Michael Robert Williams



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MATTHEW ALLISON

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Live exertainment at its best, this epic event offers community, activity, fun and a chance to network – and the 2,500 tickets are selling fast, says Hylton Drake, COO Les Mills Asia Pacific.

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SEE THE LIGHT

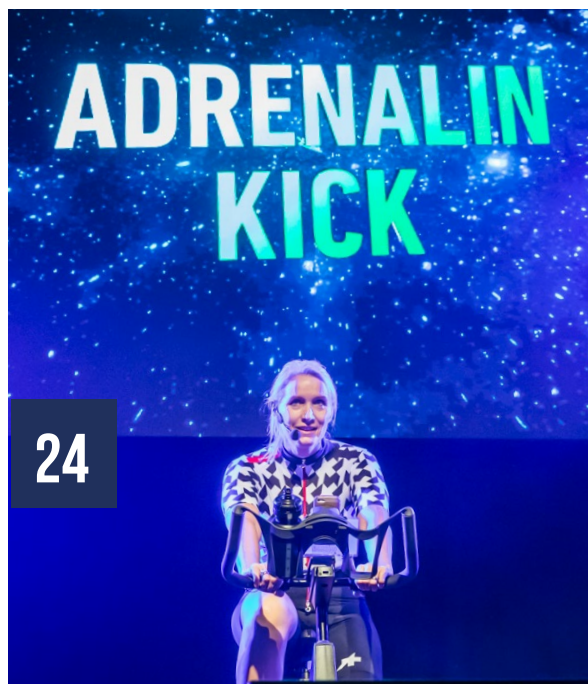
Harnessing the power of light to boost energy levels and spread happiness throughout the studio – and into people's homes. Kate Cracknell pays a visit to FirstLight, London's new boutique cycling studio.



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THE SPORT OF INDOOR CYCLING

Philippe Moity, president and co-founder of Kinomap, tells Kate Cracknell about his plans to get indoor cycling recognised not just as a form of exercise, but as a real sport that happens indoors.



**OUR MISSION IS TO CREATE
A NEW SOCIAL LIFESTYLE
AROUND FITNESS THAT
DOESN'T FULLY EXIST TODAY
- MATTHEW ALLISON**

MATTHEW ALLISON

Space Cycle, the cycling boutique that's redefining millennial fitness in Asia, is eyeing expansion across the major cities of China – and beyond, through new strategic partnerships. Its founder talks to Kate Cracknell.

You were previously president of EMI Music in Asia. How did you come to develop Space Cycle?

I was in the music industry in my 30s and it was a high-pressure environment: I looked after 18 markets, so I'd be travelling to three or four countries in a week, overseeing almost 40 different companies and thousands of employees.

I used to run as a form of stress release, but it was taking its toll on my knees. I knew I needed to look at my health in a new and different way, so I started to do yoga.

My idea at that point was to do something entrepreneurial in the world of wellbeing for the next phase of my career – but in fact, in 2002, I retired briefly, moving to Hawaii for a couple of years. During that time, I really flipped my lifestyle around to focus on wellness.

I then returned to Asia with the aim of opening a chain of top yoga studios in Taiwan and developing the next generation of yoga teachers in the Chinese market. The result was Space Yoga – the first brand within the Space Concepts family – with the first studio opening in Taipei in 2005.

How has the business evolved since then?

We now have seven studios in Taiwan and China, including one – our fourth in China – that we're opening as we speak.

Our studios are now all multi-modality, with yoga, barre, cycling, dance and HIIT all sitting under the Space Concepts umbrella; Space Cycle launched in Taiwan in June 2015 and China in June 2016.

What unites all of these disciplines is our over-arching ambition to be an entertainment lifestyle brand that's focused around fitness – one that's driven by music and live classes. This is encapsulated in our slogan: 'Moved by Music'.

Tell us more about the role of music in your studios...

When I first founded Space Yoga, in spite of my background in music, I hadn't really focused on the link between music and exercise. That changed about four and a half years ago when I started working out in some of the boutiques that were coming into the market.

I found the experience at these boutiques far more spiritual and social – and with it more motivating – than training at normal gyms. In part that was down to the instructors, but it was also down to the way they used music. I found it stayed with me for days afterwards, especially the tracks from the peaks of the workout when I was pushing myself really hard. I think it's the vulnerability in you at that moment that makes you particularly receptive to the sensory experience of music.



► I therefore decided to expand our group exercise model with music at the heart of things; our studios are now a place where music and lifestyle meet fitness. We have a music curation department, DJs, live events, influencer and celebrity playlists... And those playlists are not only used in our studios, but can also be download from the leading online streaming services – QQ Music in China and KKBox in Taiwan – which further extends the reach of our brand.

We also aim to introduce people to new music all the time. The repertoire of what we listen to can often be quite limited; we work out what we like by about college age and then we stop exploring new artists. But music is so powerful – it can change your mood in a moment – and we want to encourage people to keep finding new inspiration. So we use our playlists to expose people to new music in much the same way as radio stations used to do. We showcase music in the context of health and wellness.

Once our customers find an instructor they respect, they're open to that instructor intro-

ducing them to new music through their workout playlists – and this, in turn, enhances their experience with us.

This is a whole new way of reaching the millennial market, where the social aspect is the glue and the music is our means to communicate with them.

Tell us more about your celebrity playlists...

Our instructors are themselves often influencers – we work with them to build strong social media profiles – so people are keen to download their playlists, and we regularly work with celebrities too.

For example, if a band has released a new album, we might link up with their record label to hold an event at Space Cycle. We'll play their music, have exclusive rights to some video footage, we'll have signed merchandise, and the record label will promote it to the fans. We might then film the event and post it on fan sites, and we'll make the playlist available on our partner digital music services, so we become a downstream

partner for the launch. It's a new generation of online-to-offline model and it brings a whole new audience into our studios.

We also work with most of the entertainment companies in China to host their fan-based events: we did the main launches last year for Arianna Grande, OneRepublic, Maroon 5, the Fast & Furious 8 soundtrack... We had Linkin Park come into the studio through our partnership with Mercedes and create a playlist for us. And we take our experiences out of the clubs too: we partnered with Storm Music Festival, for example. It's important that our brand isn't only experienced in our studios.

We also have connections in the sports world – the likes of Nike and Lululemon – so we've had some of the top Chinese sports stars, such as tennis star Li Na, in our studios to host events. We had Apple CEO Tim Cook visit Space as part of the global Apple Watch launch, to promote its new features. And we have Daniel Wu Yan-Zu, who stars in the American TV series Into the Badlands, as one of our investors.

So we work with a huge number of celebrities: we've done 300+ celebrity events since

we first launched Space Cycle. People see it as the perfect space to showcase their own creative endeavours.

You mention Space Cycle specifically in the context of these events. Why is that?

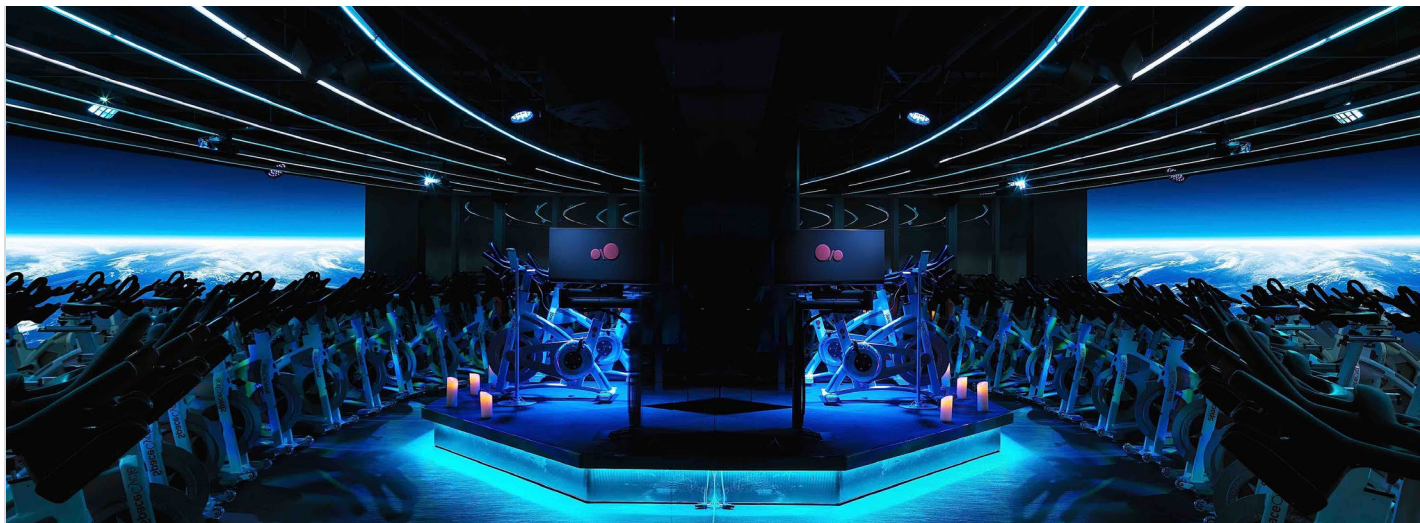
Indoor cycling is the closest you can get to a live concert experience. With the instructor up on stage it's all about performance, it's participatory, it's focused on music, there's a buzz in the studio with around 50 bikes.

This is really my motivation: I want people to feel as though they've been transported into a concert. We have technology in the studios to control the music and the lighting, and there's no distortion of sound. It's a full entertainment experience at a higher level than anything I've seen in any other boutique studio around the world.

But crucially, our focus on music doesn't come at the expense of our fitness programming: it's important to us that we teach at the highest level. To this end, all our instructors are trained by us – but they do then have a fair amount of freedom in their choreography. We want to give them a chance to rise to the occasion.



+ Space Cycle wants riders to feel they've been transported into a live concert



► What's happening in the Chinese fitness market generally?

The penetration rate is currently low, but the market is growing very quickly. People in the larger cities are becoming more focused on preventative health and are increasingly willing to spend a portion of their income on that – our classes cost around US\$22–25 in China and just under US\$20 in Taiwan.

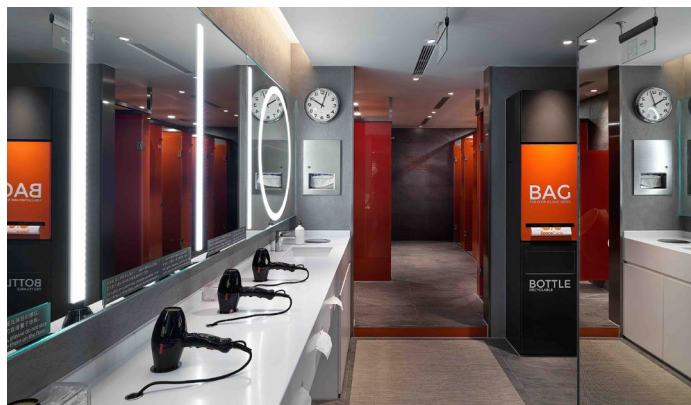
This is also a society in which people are very driven by the desire to share their experiences on social media. Indeed, China is so connected online that its ability to share and grow trends – something that's powerfully connected to millennial social media behaviour – means it will go through this cycle at a much faster rate than most countries.

We're already seeing huge growth of the fitness

sector in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities – Tier 1 being those with between 10 and 30 million people, so Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Hangzhou and Chengdu, and then with Tier 2 as well you get up to about 20 cities.

We're currently seeing the massive scaling of mass market models similar to Anytime Fitness and 24Hour Fitness. These will grow first, rolling out across second, third, fourth tier cities. But after that we'll see online fitness and the boutiques come to the fore, with consolidation of the big boxes giving way to more segmentation of the market, just as we've seen in markets like the US.

I expect all of this segmentation to happen within 24–36 months: China will catch up faster than any other developed society in the history of boutique fitness.



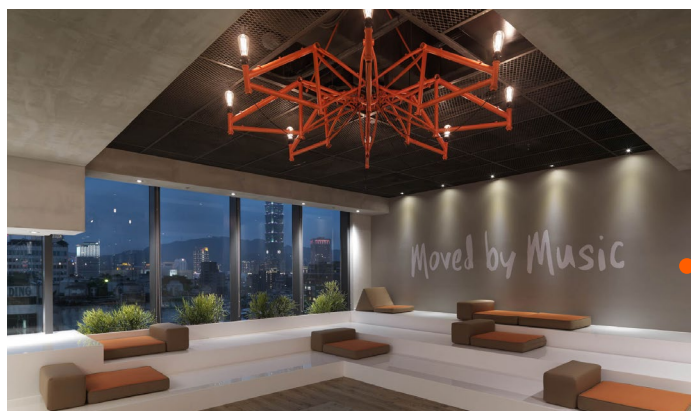
What are your expansion plans?

We recently secured US\$15m in funding, in an investment round led by Chinese internet giant Alibaba, and now plan to open 50 new studios in China and Taiwan over the next five years. We'll focus on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities in China, as well as Taipei.

We'll be opening different sizes of studio depending on the location – 1,300–1,500sq m flagships, 600–800sq m hubs and 200–400sq m 'spokes' – and some might not have all modalities, but all will be multi-modality rather than single discipline.

WE WANT TO SHOWCASE MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT & CREATIVITY, WITHOUT SACRIFICING THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE FITNESS

We're also working with GOCO Hospitality to extend the appeal of the destination spa model, adding a new dimension to the urban wellness centres it's looking to develop by incorporating 'Moved by Music' studios.



Finally, we're keen to expand into other markets outside of China and Taiwan via strategic partnerships. We're open to new ways of doing this, but essentially, we're looking for local partners with the scale to execute our model. They will then be able to plug in to a lot of what we do already: the design, music, celebrity connections, instructor training and so on can come from us. So, we're open to approaches from prospective partners who want to work with us to bring Space Concepts to their market.

If you look forward five years, where do you see the business?

We'll continue to explore new modalities, we'll open new locations and we'll focus on expanding our presence via online platforms and content. But ultimately, we want to remain highly innovative, reinforcing our role as a lifestyle influencer and not a fitness studio. We want to be another outlet to showcase music and entertainment and creativity, and we'll keep looking at how we do this without sacrificing the science behind the fitness.

Our mission is to redefine millennial fitness in highly populated urban areas, creating a new social lifestyle around fitness that doesn't fully exist today. ●



Spacecycle.com





LES MILLS LIVE — SINGAPORE 2019

Live exertainment at its best, this epic event offers community, activity, fun and a chance to network – and the 2,500 tickets are selling fast, says Hylton Drake, COO Les Mills Asia Pacific.



+ Hylton Drake

Regarded by many as the ultimate fitness festival for the region, we combine the best of entertainment and exercise in what we call “exertainment” with the best of stage setup, lighting and sound carefully coordinated with each program track, elevating the offerings of our presenters and the experience of all participants. This will also be exemplified

through our program THE TRIP, which takes cycling to a new frontier of motivating and immersive fitness experiences.

Over the last few decades, Les Mills International CEO Phillip Mills has seen huge change in what drives club members and keeps them motivated. In this video, using exercise bikes as an example, he explores how the evolution of technology has helped create a more motivating environment for exercise that helps members achieve more.



Phillip Mills - The Evolution Of Motivation

We started running Les Mills Live for the first time in Singapore in 2018 and we saw the benefits and potential that it offers to various facets of the business, especially in Southeast Asia which is currently experiencing rapid growth in terms of fitness awareness and gym/club membership adoption. That's why we decided to bring it back to Singapore for 2019 as it is a strategic point for the various countries in our market to congregate, as well as a popular international hub for other countries. This is possibly why our 2019 event has already attracted fitness fans from as far as US, UK, France and we anticipate that there will be more people from other countries joining us. We're expecting many international instructors and fitness leaders from emerging and established markets alike to take this opportunity to network while enjoying themselves.

From a participant number of over 1,300 people in 2018, and the rave reviews received, we are not surprised that ticket sales for our 2019

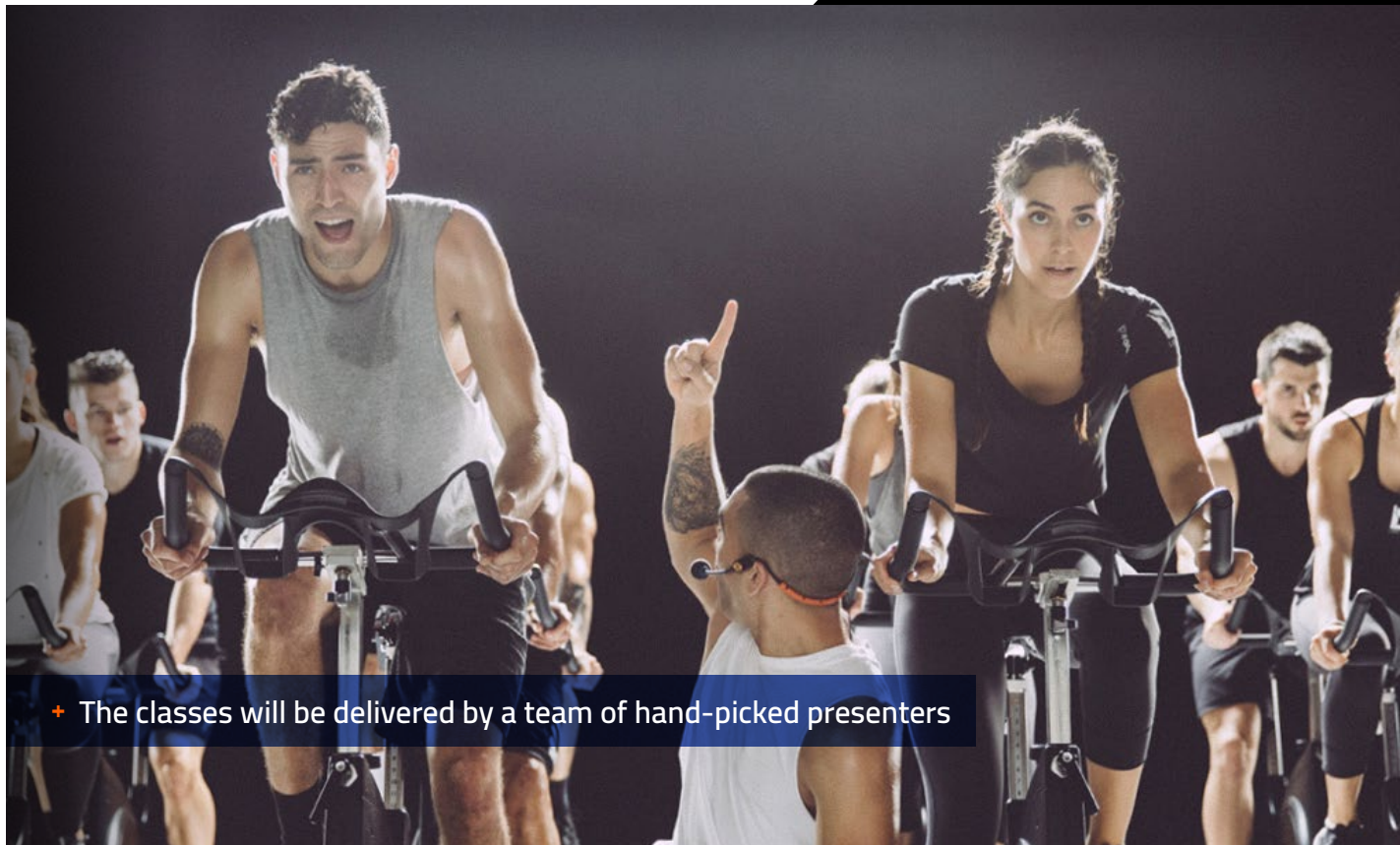
**IMAGINE BEING AMONG
OVER A THOUSAND PEOPLE,
ENERGIZED BY THE MUSIC,
MOVING FULL-OUT TO THE
HYPNOTIC RHYTHM**

event is already close to that figure at this early bird ticketing stage, and we anticipate to be playing host to over 2,500 participants in 2019!

Imagine being among over a thousand people, energized by the music, moving full-out to the hypnotic rhythm and beats as they are led by our program directors or their 'fitness heroes' who are the designers and first teachers of the various Les Mills program tracks and are pretty much synonymous with them. ▶



+ The event isn't just about exercise; it's about experience, connection, community



+ The classes will be delivered by a team of hand-picked presenters

- ▶ This event is not just about 'doing exercise' or working out in a group, but it's about experience, connection, challenge, community and performance. Our goal is that each and every one who attends, leaves inspired and with tools and insights that they can harness and build upon even long after the event ends.

We are excited about the impact that we will be making in each participant's life through this epic event.



Friday night bikes

For the first time in Singapore: FRIDAY NIGHT BIKES powered by BODY BIKE® makes its debut. The 4-hour cycle-a-thon features popular Les Mills cycle programs RPM, SPRINT and new to market THE TRIP. THE TRIP is an immersive cycle experience where riders are lead through fantastical

worlds on big screens. The classes will be delivered by a team of hand-picked presenters from Australia, Southeast Asia and THE MAN himself Glen Ostergaard – the Program Director of both RPM and SPRINT.

Ophelia from Australia is making the trek to Singapore especially for Friday Night Bikes

"I'm expecting on the Friday night a whole lot of crazy cycle obsession!" We are quietly confident there will be a whole-lotta-obsession as at the time of writing most of the cycling sessions have sold out.



Amanda Breen, Les Mills RPM Presenter says:

"I can't wait to ride with 150 people who love indoor cycling – the energy will be insane!" "The fact that we are featuring our 3 cycle programs makes the event even more special, I'm so excited!"

LES MILLS ASIA PACIFIC



Les Mills Asia Pacific



Les Mills Asia Pacific



Les Mills website



Les Mills tickets



Les Mills Asia Pacific (LMAP) was founded when Bill Robertson, then owner of Deakin Health Spa in Canberra, Australia (now Fitness First) mused the decline in aerobics classes. In search of answers Bill travelled to Auckland New Zealand to investigate a new concept in aerobics: PUMP.

Immediately he liked what he saw: enmasse members participating in a weights class to music – revolutionary in so many ways: females participating in resistance training, males participating in aerobics and barbells and weight-plates occupying real-estate on the studio floor.

Today we would think nothing of this concept – but in the 90s, females and weight-training were atypical, males certainly didn't participate in aerobics and weights were confined to the gym floor.

However, Bill was immediately hooked and recognized the potential in the concept for his facility back home. And right he was: PUMP was a success. Members flocked back to the aerobics studio no thanks to this pre-choreographed-weights-to-music class.

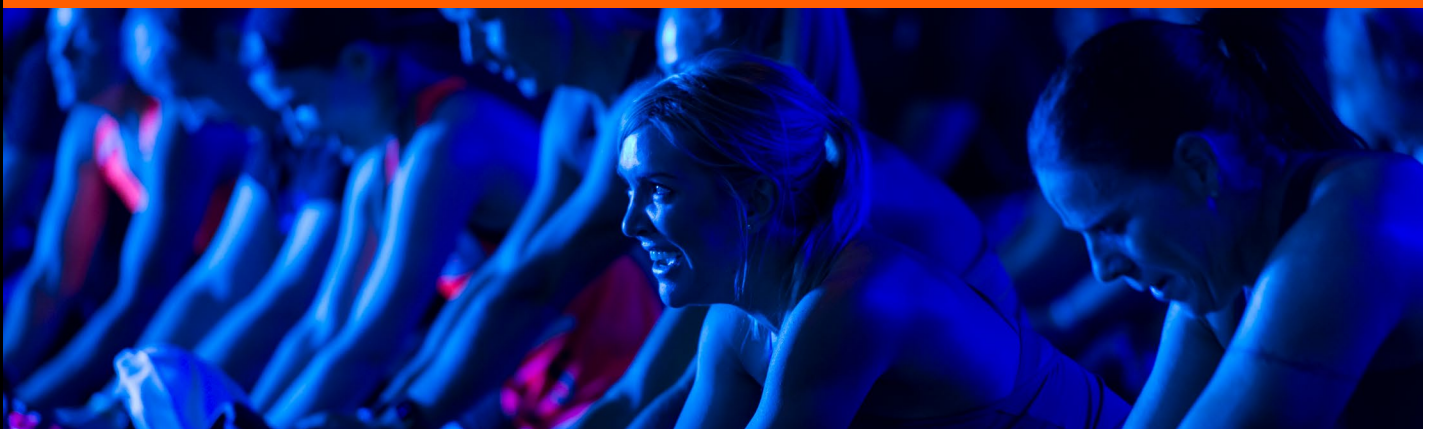
This gamble on a single program, in a single facility in Canberra has 2-decades later expanded in to 15 programs (including RPM and BODYBALANCE) across 1,000 facilities in Australia and Southeast Asia. Facilitating these classes across the Asia Pacific region is close to 10,000 Les Mills trained Instructors.

Les Mills mission

Les Mills' mission is to create a fitter planet, and we do this by helping clubs build healthier businesses by making more people love their clubs. Our programs help them achieve this through better member acquisition and retention as studies show that club members who join group fitness classes are 4 times more likely to attend their facility. Statistics also show that members that attend their facility twice/week remain a member between 2-5 years. As instructors play a key part in enabling this to happen by delivering our programs, we also focus on growing our instructors so that they become the greatest instructors (and human beings) they can be. ●

LMAP countries

Australia, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Guam, Brunei, Maldives, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Laos





SEE THE LIGHT

Harnessing the power of light to boost energy levels and spread happiness throughout the studio – and into people’s homes. Kate Cracknell pays a visit to FirstLight, London’s new boutique cycling studio.

“I first came up with the idea for FirstLight Cycle in the lobby of a New York hotel,” says Mark Anthony, the former celebrity PT turned indoor cycling enthusiast, sitting in the bright reception area of his newly-opened boutique cycling studio.

“I’d gone out to New York to look at the cycling scene there and was immediately hooked. I loved what the studios gave me: the energy of working out as a group rather than one-to-one.

“I had previously worked as a personal trainer, operating at the top of my profession for two decades, but the time had come where I no longer felt I had the energy to get up at 4.00am and go to bed at 1.00am every day. I felt opening a cycling studio might be a good next step for me. “I had already started mulling over how I might

do this when I found myself watching an incredible sunrise over New York through a huge window in my hotel lobby. I thought to myself: ‘How incredible would it be to run a group cycling class right here, with this view?’ That was the beginning of FirstLight.

“This was back in 2014, so it’s taken time to come to fruition – I’ve had to find the right technology to recreate that solar experience, as well as finding the right location. Really, the property market in London is a bidding war nowadays, and it’s taken us a long time to find the right space.

“But we’re here now, we have a strong vision, we’re clear what we stand for, and I believe we can become a key player in the boutique market over the coming years.”



Journey of the sun

He continues: "The concept of FirstLight is centred on harnessing the combined power of light and exercise, both of which have huge benefits for our body and our soul.

"Studio 1 houses our signature cycling concept, which revolves around the journey of the sun: from first light through high noon to sunset. There's a 30ft screen filling the front wall of the studio, so you find yourself immersed in a landscape over which the sun rises, moves across the sky and then sets. This simulated sunshine is designed to boost participants' energy levels and mood – sunshine makes us happy.

"The screen is also a mirror, so our instructors – we call them our maestros – can switch between the two to suit their class structure. We create threads they have to follow in their programming – we dictate the high points based on the phases of the sun, which is reflected in the prescribed BPM of the music – but they choose their own tracks and do their own choreography around these threads. In this way, they can create their own signature workouts, each of which we review and approve before they're allowed to use them in the studio.

"We also put our maestros, all of whom are employed by us rather than freelance, through eight weeks of training at our academy, so they absolutely understand our concept and our expectation of robust, credible workouts."

Box and ride

"But we have 9,000sq ft of space here, which is large for a boutique. It means that, in addition to our 58-bike studio 1, we've been able to create two further studios.

"Studios 2 and 3 will open in January: a 40-capacity boxing studio, where the sun will gradually work its way from east to west above your head, rather than across a screen at the front of the cycling studio; and a 21-bike HIIT cycling studio, which will be dark and intense and raw, with tough workouts that last half an hour as opposed to the 45- or 60-minute classes in studio 1."

He adds: "My uncle used to be heavyweight boxing champion of Asia, so I've grown up with boxing. Meanwhile, my personal expertise is strength training. We've combined both of these elements to create a unique twist on a boxing class, combining free weights with punchbags where you 'punch by number' – the bags are marked up to show exactly where to hit them.

**WE DICTATE THE HIGH
POINTS BASED ON THE
PHASES OF THE SUN,
WHICH IS REFLECTED IN
THE BPM OF THE MUSIC
- MARK ANTHONY**



"We'll also be introducing some more challenging cycling workouts into the timetable over the coming weeks, even in studio 1. At the moment, ►



it's a fairly comfortable ride. We'll still offer that – our audience is mostly 35- to 60-year-olds and we don't want to alienate anyone – but younger riders tend to want something a bit tougher, so we'll be addressing that."

The future is live

Anthony continues: "The other thing we're launching in January is home streaming, and this will be central to our whole business model moving forward. I firmly believe people are increasingly leaning towards home fitness, so all three of our studios have been built with this technology embedded.

"Our boxing studio has two cameras, so the maestro can switch between them and talk directly to people taking part from home; they'll be shadow boxing rather than using a bag, so all they need is a bench and some dumbbells, which we can sell to them. We're still working out how to fully convey the journey of the sun when we live stream our boxing classes, because people will be streaming it to their TVs.

“However, for the cycling classes we have a really exciting innovation: we’ll be unveiling our own Peloton-style home fitness bike in January. FirstLight classes will be live streamed to its 22-inch screen – the maestro will be able to see exactly who’s tuning in, so they can give them a shout out – but there will also be a frame around the screen. This will emit light throughout the class, in line with the phases of the sun, so at-home exercisers experience all the feelgood benefits of our studio-based workouts.”

A unisex model

“We had originally planned to launch a second studio in London, but we aren’t doing that any more. We may eventually open other studios if we move into Europe and the US, but there will be no more in the UK,” adds Anthony.

“That’s because I believe the future of indoor cycling – in fact, the future of all genres of exercise – is streaming. We’re gearing our whole set-up around this, which is why I’ve invested in bringing the very best technology to this 9,000sq ft studio. This will be our hub.



FIRSTLIGHT CYCLE – VITAL STATISTICS

- **Location:** Westfield London shopping centre
- **Opened:** Late September 2018
- **Investment:** £1.5m
- **Size:** 9,000sq ft
- **Studios:** 3
- **Total capacity:** 120
- **Break-even:** 35% capacity
- **Studio class prices:** £20 per class, up to £125 monthly unlimited; packages also available
- **Home fitness prices:** £19 a month per discipline, or £35 for both cycling and boxing
- **Supplier:** Schwinn

“In fact, I also believe streaming is the way to get men involved in group exercise. They don’t want to come into a studio environment – 85 per cent of our customers at FirstLight are women – but being able to train from home makes all the difference. In addition, whereas our studio classes are all about the experience, the FirstLight at-home bike will also offer stats and performance data – something we believe will further extend our appeal among men.”

He concludes: “I do think you need a strong story to make live streaming work, but I believe our light-centred classes have what it takes. As we build our brand and extend our reach, I believe FirstLight will become a brand that people love to follow.” ●



Firstlightcycle.co.uk

“TECHNOLOGY SHOULD

NEVER BE THE

STRATEGY IN ITSELF”

— PAUL BOWMAN



THE FUTURE OF INDOOR CYCLING

Personalising experiences, harnessing influencers and competing with Peloton. The future of fitness is digital – and it needn't be intimidating. Indeed, technology offers health club operators the chance to grow and future-proof their businesses. Paul Bowman, CEO of digital fitness specialist Wexer, speaks to Kate Cracknell

Let's set the scene: what is digital fitness, and what's driving this trend?

Put very simply, digital fitness is fitness that's enabled by technology.

At the heart of it, it's about choice and convenience. In today's increasingly digital world, consumers want – and expect to be able – to engage with fitness experiences when and where they want. It may be that they'd like to get to a health club or gym, but in practice there can be so many barriers that stand in the way of this happening. We have to look at ways of making fitness easier to consume, and the only cost-effective way of doing this is by embracing technology.

Importantly, this technology is already out there.

What does digital fitness look like in practice?

At the moment, digital fitness is predominantly taking the shape of third party apps and online fitness providers. These providers have identified and seized the opportunity quicker than traditional fitness providers, which is of course a challenge to the health club model as we know it. It's why many operators see technology as a threat.

But it needn't be this way: in fact, technology hands operators the tools they need to strengthen and future-proof their business-

es. It allows health clubs stay relevant in a digital world, both by extending their appeal to a broader audience and by better serving existing members.

Let's look at this specifically from an indoor cycling perspective. Say someone walks into your club and they're interested in having a go at cycling; they might even have been into cycling before, but not been on a bike in a while. Your live instructor-led classes might be a bit intimidating for them at first – all those regulars on their favourite bikes. However, they'll probably feel a lot more comfortable doing a virtual or live streamed class; we have a lot of data to show how these classes act as confidence-building feeders into live classes.

Even better, imagine having bikes on the gym floor, away from the studio space altogether, each with personal screens on which you're able to run a live streaming channel. By streaming high quality indoor cycling classes direct from your studio – which could be at any club in your estate – you're giving members a chance to take part with no sense of pressure on them at all. You're also giving everyone access to your very best instructors.

With our technology, all of this is already possible. ►

- ▶ Even better, our data shows there's only a 15 per cent drop-off between levels of attendance at live streamed classes versus live classes, so there's huge scope for operators to play with the balance – live, live streaming, virtual – to create the perfect schedule that most cost-effectively delivers the experience members want.

If you can live stream between clubs, can you live stream into people's homes?

Absolutely – and of course, given the success of Peloton, it isn't too much of a leap to see how all this could translate to the at-home fitness market.

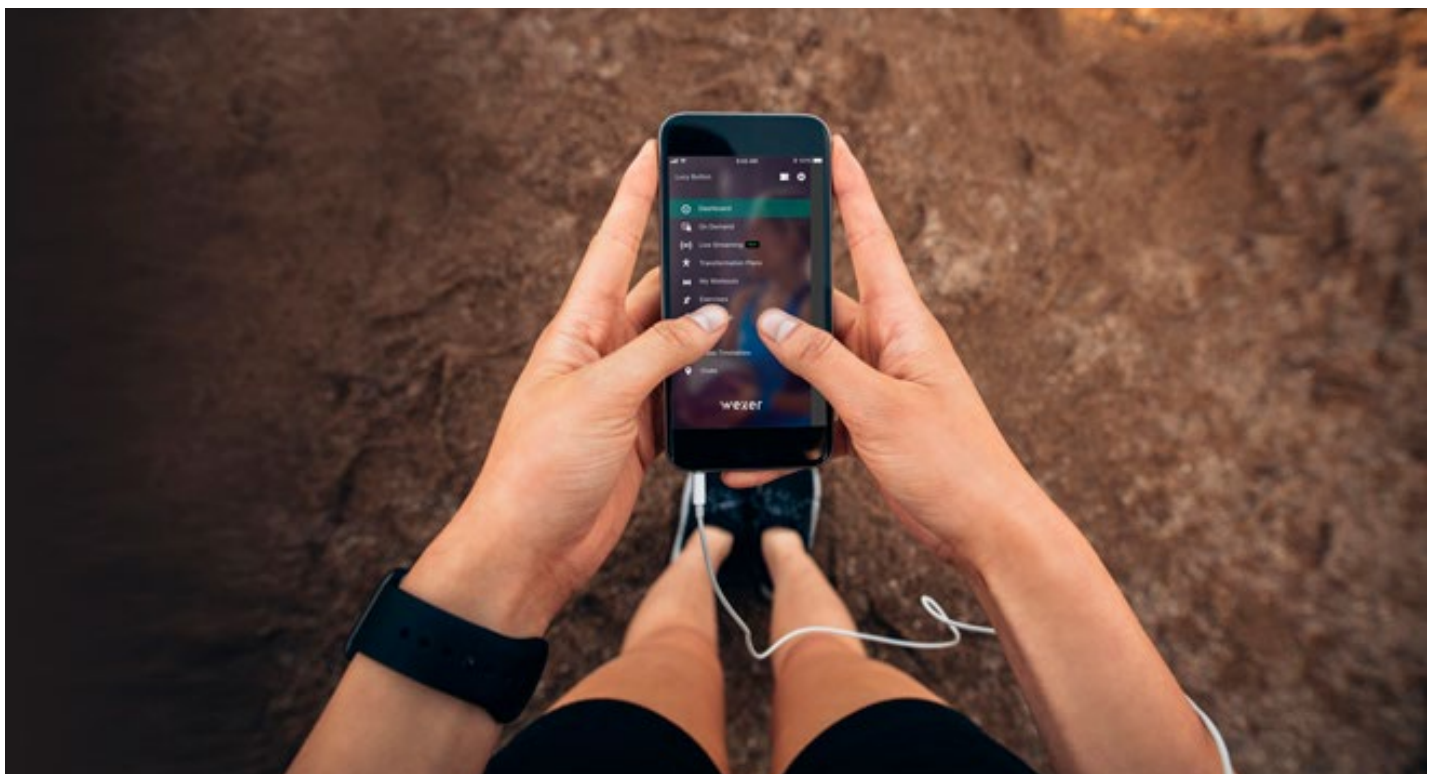
Operators could quite easily partner with a supplier to sell bikes for at-home use – they don't need to be as robust, or therefore as expensive, as commercial bikes – and live stream classes run by their very best instructors for digital members to do at home. Even if you only had one or two amazing trainers, you could get them into every living room.

It would be a win-win-win scenario: giving consumers the convenience they want, extending the reach (and revenue streams) of a club, and helping the supplier sell more bikes.

You mention digital members. What do you mean by this?

Digital members can be digital-only – people who only ever tap in to your expertise and programming remotely – or hybrid club/digital members, who still want to come to the club for the social aspect, but for whom technology offers the convenience they need to be active more regularly.

The key to digital memberships is the mobile phone – and specifically, an app such as Wexer Mobile. The club remains the hub of expertise, advice, content creation and (where relevant) in-person experiences; the phone provides the means to tap in to all of this away from the club.



wexer

Click to play video

+ Research shows virtual fitness increases member retention and boosts new member acquisition

It's possible to programme anything into the app, so clubs can remotely deliver highly personalised training plans to groups or individuals. You might want to design cycling conditioning programmes for serious cycling enthusiasts, for example, to complement all the Spinning they're doing.

You could prescribe specific classes you want them to do (in the club or elsewhere via live streaming). You could programme an actual ride for them to go out and do on the road. And all of this can be managed centrally, with the club/trainer setting tasks and monitoring what members have completed. Wexer also syncs with Strava and other GPS-based trackers, so all data is in one place.

The phone is also the driver of personalisation for hybrid members within the club. Imagine walking

CYCLING WILL BE INFLUENCER-LED, AND TECHNOLOGY WILL ENABLE THIS

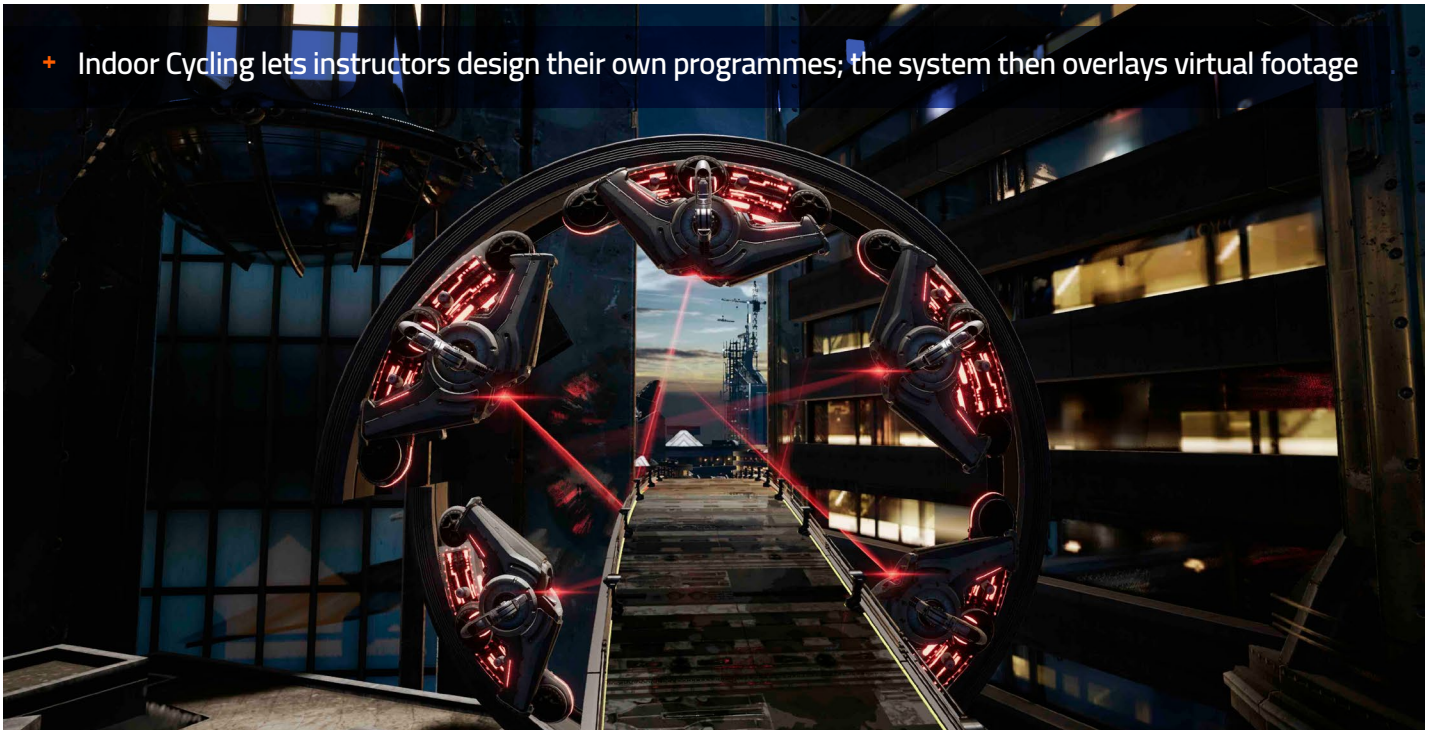
into a club that, thanks to all the data it's gathered through its app, knows you, what you like doing, what other associated needs you might have. Add in a few beacons and this then translates into personalised recommendations popping up on your phone as you walk into the club, pointing

you towards a cycling class that's about to start, for example, or a special offer on cycling apparel. It's a great way to better serve the member and simultaneously drive revenue within the club.

Are there any other cycling-related innovations you'd like to mention?

Until now, most virtual cycling involved footage that the instructor had to design their workouts around. Now, we're starting to see technology emerging that actively supports and engages the instructor.

- + Indoor Cycling lets instructors design their own programmes; the system then overlays virtual footage



- ▶ Intelligent Cycling's market-leading technology, available on the Wexer platform, is a great example of this. Instructors go to the portal to design their own programmes – the exact intervals they want to do – with the system then using AI to overlay virtual footage that directly correlates with the intensity of the workout: hit a tough interval, for example, and you'll see the track suddenly rise ahead of you into an uphill climb.

It puts the instructor right back at the heart of things.

Intelligent Cycling can be used not only as a backdrop to a live class, but can also be saved and scheduled to run as a virtual class at any time. It allows for a more personal approach to virtual fitness, whereby people can choose to do classes designed and recommended by their favourite instructor.

What's your advice for operators who haven't yet gone digital – how should they start this process?

Ultimately my advice is: just start. Operators who don't embrace digital opportunities risk being left behind.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

IS ABOUT BEING RELEVANT

TO EVERY MEMBER - AND

EVERY POTENTIAL END USER

However, don't just 'go digital' without working out how it sits within your overall business strategy. Look at what you want to achieve, then look at what tech is available to enable this.

For example, if your goal is to drive revenue by attracting new members, your first toe in the water might be something like the Wexer Web Player – a password-protected portal that allows people to log in and do virtual classes from home, sampling your offering before they commit.

If you want to add value to members using your facilities, enhancing your in-club group exercise offering can be a great idea. There are over 900 classes on our virtual class platform – everything from indoor cycling to HIIT, pilates to pre- and post-natal to golf conditioning – so there's

something for everyone. It's a highly cost-effective way to supplement your live classes and deliver a high quality, round-the-clock group exercise timetable.

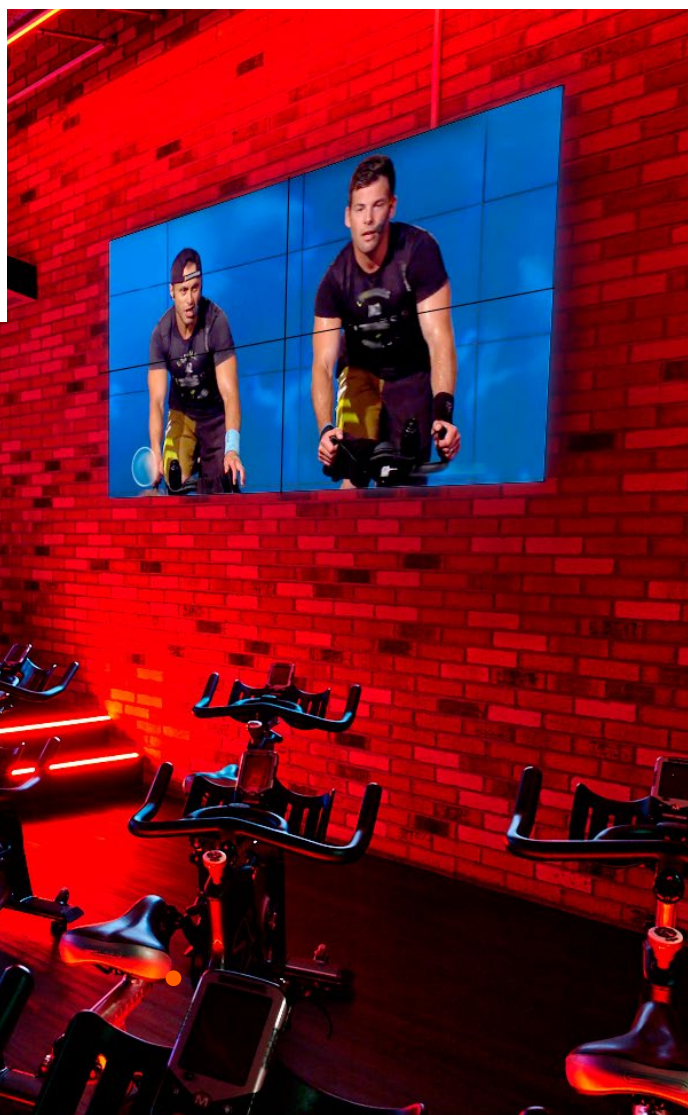
My main piece of advice is this: technology should never be the strategy in itself. Digital transformation is about being relevant to every member, and every potential end user, by harnessing the delivery channels they choose to use. These channels might be physical or they might be technological, but you need to assess every single option and make the appropriate choices for your target market.

What do you see as the future of indoor cycling?

There's a lot of data to show that loyalty within indoor cycling – indeed, within group exercise in general – is to the individual instructor. The future of indoor cycling will therefore be about finding ways to harness the power of influencers – the superstar instructors with large numbers of passionate followers.

That might mean offering virtual classes led by world-leading names in the field of cycling. It might mean operators filming classes led by their own group cycling superstars and live streaming these across their estate, maximising the reach and impact of their best people. It might mean more technology evolving that, like Intelligent Cycling, engages the trainer in the cycling experience.

The details will vary from club to club, but one thing will be consistent: cycling will be influencer-led, and technology will enable this. ●



+ Data shows virtual classes act as confidence-building feeders into live classes



All photography by Danny Gabay

ØRBIKE — A DREAM COMING TRUE

With 280 bikes and up to 1200 cyclists, ØRBIKE is one of the largest indoor cycling events in Denmark. Meet Jesper Sørensen, the cycling aficionado behind it all, and read the full story about making a dream come true.

The story about one the largest indoor cycling events in Denmark, ØRBIKE, takes its beginning six years ago, when Jesper Sørensen, also known as JAS among friends, was first introduced to indoor cycling. With a deep-felt passion for road cycling, he found indoor cycling to be the perfect supplement to his training routine, and it did not take long before he was completely and utterly hooked. Consequently, he decided to become an indoor cycling instructor and soon started working as an instructor at Midtfyns Fitness Center leading indoor cycling classes on a daily basis.

Working at the local fitness center, he began, however, to feel an urge to test his instructor skills somewhere else. He envisioned a bigger scene and a larger crowd, and this kick-started his dream of organizing a large-scale indoor cycling event. As a young man he used to work as a DJ and with his passion for not only cycling but also for music, he felt that his dream was within reach. The idea of organizing an indoor cycling event kept growing on him, and he decided to commence on an exciting and challenging journey toward his goal.

The idea of ØRBIKE is born

"As an active road cyclist and working in the cycling industry in Denmark, representing ASSOS cycling wear, cycling is both a passion and a livelihood to me", says Jesper Sørensen, in an attempt to describe what cycling means to him and what motivated him to organize the first ØRBIKE event.

Passion and personal ambitions were, however, not the only motivation factors for Jesper Jas Sørensen. Another strong motivation factor was the increased demand at the local indoor cycling center for a heart rate monitor system for group workout. "We tried hard to raise the funds for the heart rate monitor system, but we did not succeed", says Jesper Jas Sørensen. "We talked to various foundations, sponsors and the local civic association, but they were not willing to fund equipment – only events! Suddenly, it seemed like I had reached the point of no return, and that this was the final incentive I needed to get the project started".

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

WITH ABSOLUTELY NO

EXPERIENCE WAS TOUGH

Difficult beginnings

The event gradually began to take shape - not only in the mind of Jesper Jas Sørensen but also in real life - and in 2014 the first ØRBIKE indoor cycling event finally took place in the small town of Ørbæk on the island of Funen, Denmark. The event spanned six hours and included 88 bikes and four company teams.

"Starting from scratch with absolutely no experience was tough", Jesper Jas Sørensen admits. "With a last-minute sponsorship cycle race we just barely managed to make a small surplus, and skeptical voices doubted the future of the entire project. Should we take a risk and try again? It was not an easy decision, but fortunately we have managed to prove the skeptics wrong." ▶



+ Great lighting contributes to an immersive experience



► From 88 to 280 bikes

Since the difficult beginnings, ØRBIKE has experienced significant growth, and has evolved into a fun and popular fundraising event selling tickets at record speed and with great importance to the local community. According to Jesper Jas Sørensen, ØRBIKE is one of the most entertaining and well-organized indoor cycling events in Denmark. He is of course not completely objective in his evaluation, but the numbers speak for themselves. When the event celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2018, it included 280 bikes, 45 company teams, 12 instructors, and 1200 riders who kept the bikes spinning for 12 hours. And every year, when the event takes place the second Saturday of November, the population of the small town of Ørbæk is doubled.

An invaluable team effort

"In the early days, I was sort of a lone warrior", says Jesper Jas Sørensen, "but today, it is a very different story. Without the help of others,

I could never pull it off. The more than 1200 riders need food, service and massage, and during the event more than 150 invaluable, local volunteers keep the wheels turning, so to speak. Together with our six members of the board and invaluable partners and sponsors, like Fitness Engros and BODY BIKE, our volunteers give the riders nothing less than a superior and memorable cycling experience."

IT TAKES 12 COMMITTED

INSTRUCTORS TO COVER

A 12-HOUR EVENT

Meet the instructors

When it comes to creating memorable cycling experiences, the indoor cycling instructors are leading forces that play a significant role in the success of the event. "It takes 12 committed in-



+ Thomas Alsing, 6th hour



+ Evert van der Zee, final hour



+ Christian B. Mentzoni, 5th hour



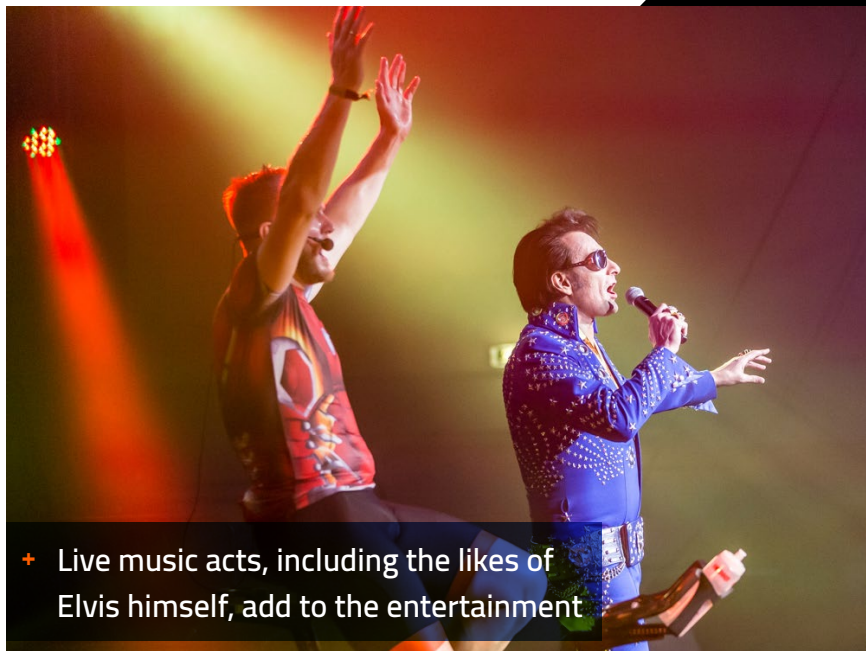
structors to cover a 12-hour event", Jesper Jas Sørensen explains. "We always try to find instructors with different personalities and styles to ensure variation and to keep on challenging the riders. Our aim is to be able to present a mix of well-known, experienced instructors and new, upcoming talents."

Drummers and dancers

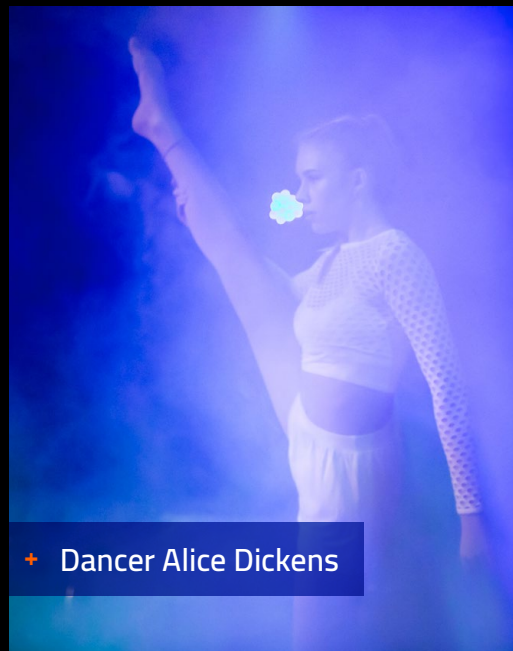
At ØRBIKE 2018, instructor Rikke Kirkegaard kicked off the event and made sure that the riders got the pulse pumping and the sweat rolling during the first class of the day. She knew from experience that the opening hour of a big event has to offer something out of the ordinary. "When I said yes to open ØRBIKE 2018, I told Jas right away that I wanted an orchestra of drummers on the stage with me", Rikke Kirkegaard says. "He agreed without flinching, and told me that he would find the drummers for me. Along the way I even added a solo dancer to the show."

Indoor cycling comes first

Regardless of the big show setup, Rikke Kirkegaard is clear about what matters the most to her. "To me, the entertainment part is always secondary. The actual indoor cycling experience is truly what matters. That is why my event hours always closely resemble my daily classes at the local fitness center. I just add a bit of glamour, like drummers and a dancer, or change the playlist. Some tunes might work at the gym but not at a big event with hundreds of riders, stage lighting and so on", Rikke Kirkegaard explains. ▶



- + Live music acts, including the likes of Elvis himself, add to the entertainment



- + Dancer Alice Dickens

► **Passion & positive vibes**

No matter where the scene is set, at the local gym or at a big event, indoor cycling is all about fun, passion and positive vibes, if you ask

**I WANT IT TO BE FUN AND
ENTERTAINING; A FIRST CLASS
SHOW COMBINED WITH THE
BEST INDOOR CYCLING
CLASSES YOU CAN IMAGINE**

Rikke Kirkegaard. "To me, being an indoor cycling instructor is all about having fun, spreading joy and motivating people to do their best. I love working with the combination of music, cycling and choreography and always strive to take it to a higher level. I have a true passion for indoor cycling, and I feel very privileged to be able to share it with others. It brings so much positive energy into my life", Rikke concludes.

Making a difference for children with cancer

Like Rikke, Jesper Jas Sørensen is also driven by passion and by his strong commitment to develop a one-of-a-kind cycling event. "I want it to be fun and entertaining; a first class show



combined with the best indoor cycling classes you can imagine. I want to try out new ideas and to create an event that people look forward to. That is my main motivation", says Jesper Jas Sørensen.

In recent years, raising money for charity has, however, also become an important motivation. In 2018, ØRBIKE raised money for the Children's Cancer Fund and Team Rynkeby to help support children with cancer and their families.

ØRBIKE in the future

Five years has flown by since the first ØRBIKE


event, but Jesper Jas Sørensen and his team are still going strong. "We are hungry for more", Jesper Jas Sørensen exclaims. "Our goal for the future is to consolidate our position as one of the leading indoor bike events in Denmark and even in Europe. We want to be the preferred indoor cycling event with the highest entertainment value, continuously setting the bar high when it comes to the quality of the bikes, stage lighting, sound, food, service and facilities. Through our passion, dedication and support from all the local volunteers I feel confident that ØRBIKE will be THE indoor cycling event to attend – not only next year but also in the years to come." ●



RIKKE KIRKEGAARD

Two times event instructor at ØRBIKE

- Clinical dietitian
- Indoor cycling instructor with 20 years experience
- Official MixMeister Master
- Instructor at SATS
- Instructor and coordinator at local fitness center Sabro
- Event coordinator at TOUR de NO MERCY
- Ambassador for ASSOS cycling wear


 Rikke Kirkegaard




JESPER JAS SØRENSEN

Initiator and driving force behind ØRBIKE 12-hour indoor bike event

- Sales Manager at Assos of Switzerland Nordic department
- Indoor cycling instructor
- Official MixMeister Master

 orbike.dk

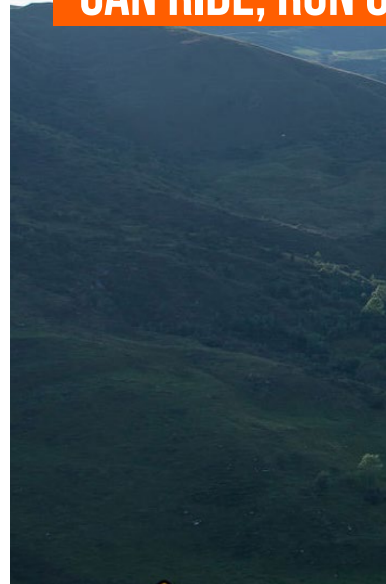
 Ørbike eventet

 Ørbike eventet



+ Philippe Moity

KINOMAP ALLOW
TO ACCESS REAL
FOOTAGE — A HU
ROUTES THROUG
CAN RIDE, RUN O



THE SPORT OF INDOOR CYCLING

Philippe Moity, president and co-founder of Kinomap, tells Kate Cracknell about his plans to get indoor cycling recognised not just as a form of exercise, but as a real sport that happens indoors

What's the idea behind Kinomap?

Indoor training can be boring. People buy a piece of gym equipment for their home and within months they're disengaged and no longer using it. In creating Kinomap, our idea was to make indoor sessions fun, using technology to engage people and make their journey to good health more interesting.

What is Kinomap?

Kinomap allows exercisers to access real-world

video footage – a huge variety of routes through which they can ride, run or row – to make their indoor training more engaging.

It was developed over two key phases. The first phase, in 2010, was Kinomap.com: a free sharing website for geolocated, user-generated video content. Anyone who uploads content to Kinomap needs to upload not only a video, but also the corresponding GPS track; it's a bit like YouTube and GoogleMaps rolled into one.

VS EXERCISERS
-WORLD VIDEO
GE VARIETY OF
H WHICH THEY
R ROW



We now have 140,000km of track – real video footage – from 86 countries around the world, from Europe to Brazil, China to Vietnam to Mongolia. You can go for a run on the Great Wall of China, cycle the Alpe d’Huez route from the Tour de France, row along the canals in Amsterdam... There’s a huge diversity of content, with five to 10 new videos uploaded by users every day and made available to those using Kinomap to train indoors.

Having created Kinomap.com to collect video content, we then moved on to developing training apps that used this content. The main Kinomap app was launched in 2013 and was followed by a series of white label apps for partners, like Decathlon and Kettler, who promote Kinomap to those purchasing their equipment; Kino-

KINOMAP WORKS WITH ALL TYPES OF CARDIO EQUIPMENT: BIKES, TREADMILLS, CROSS-TRAINERS AND ROWERS

map works with all types of cardio equipment, from indoor and recumbent bikes to treadmills, cross-trainers and rowing machines.

What makes Kinomap technology special?

The geolocation technology, combined with the real video footage, is key. It moves Kinomap away from being virtual reality entertainment and into a sporting, performance-focused arena.

► These are real videos of real tracks that you have to complete; anyone using our Challenge mode will see their avatar moving along the track on the map at exactly the same speed as they're moving through the video footage. It doesn't matter how long the original contributor took to complete the track: they might have labelled it as a 30-minute track, but you could do it faster or slower depending on your power output on your chosen piece of cardio equipment.

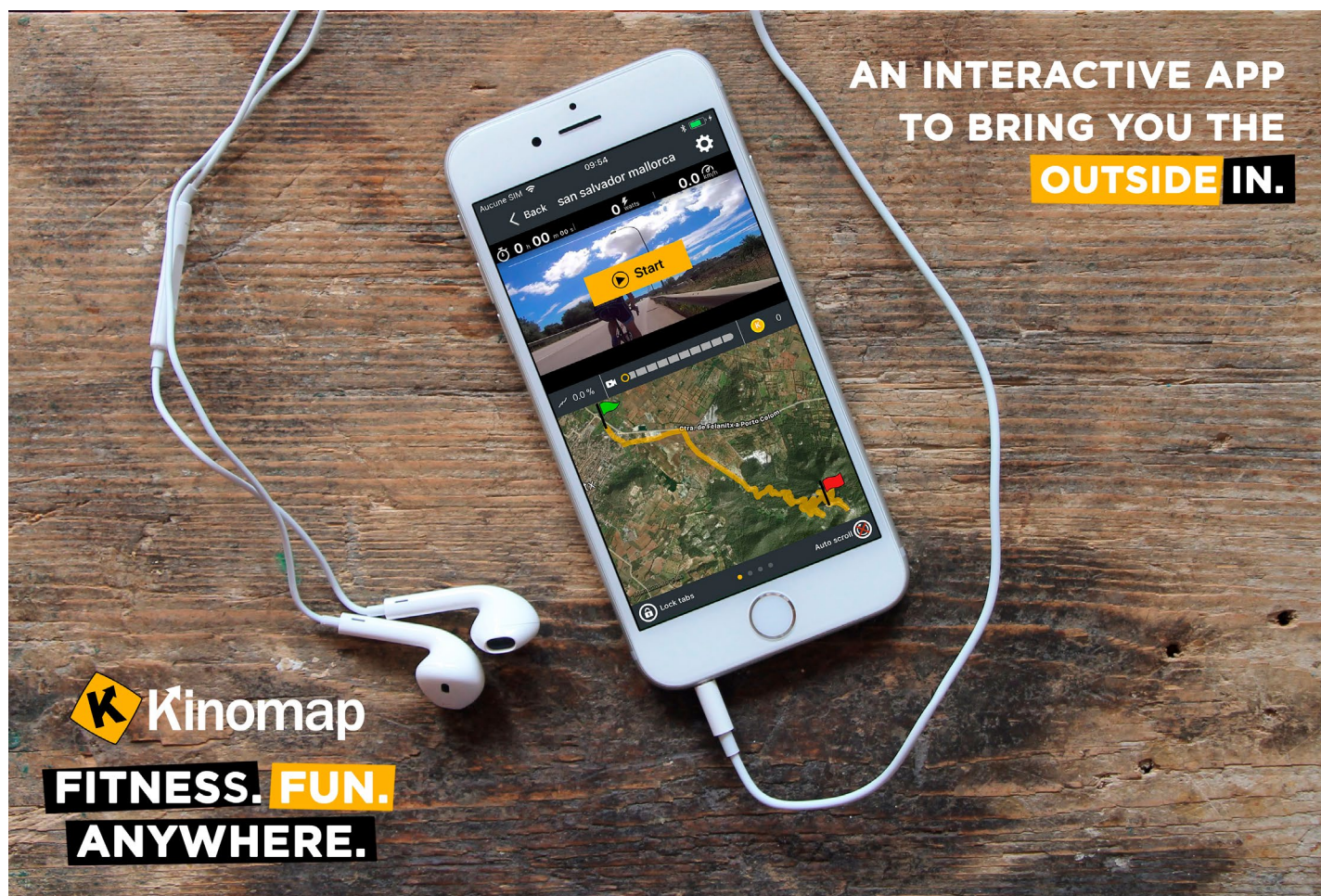
And the system is highly accurate – so much so that when it comes to cycling, for example, Strava equates it to a real road ride and allows you to log your Kinomap training data on its app.

The system works best when the cardio equipment features a sensor that Kinomap can pair with. On a bike, for example, this allows the resistance to automatically adjust to the incline of the track. Where the bike has a power me-

YOU CAN STILL USE KINOMAP IF YOU HAVE AN OLDER PIECE OF FITNESS EQUIPMENT WITH NO INBUILT ELECTRONICS

ter, we can also accurately adjust your speed: if your output is 200 watts on a flat road, we'll move you along at 30kph; if you're climbing the Alpe d'Huez at an 11 per cent incline, you'll be down to 8kph.

However, you can still use Kinomap if you have an older piece of fitness equipment with no in-built electronics: the app can use the front-facing camera on your mobile phone to detect your cadence on a bike, your stride if you're running, or your stroke on a rowing machine.



**AN INTERACTIVE APP
TO BRING YOU THE
OUTSIDE IN.**

Kinomap
**FITNESS. FUN.
ANYWHERE.**

Alternatively, if you'd rather just use the video as entertainment, you can choose Discovery mode. In this case, you pass through the video at the same speed as the contributor. You'll still feel the inclines and declines, but you don't get the full experience of completing the track for yourself.

How does it work if you're training from home?

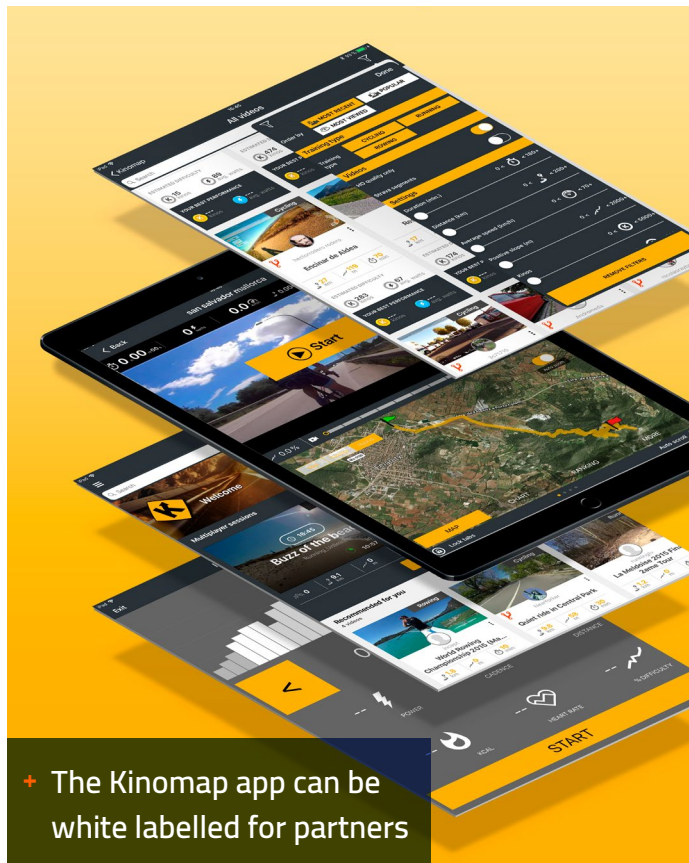
Most people run the app through their smartphone and cast the video onto a TV screen, so the whole experience is very immersive.

It's made even more engaging by the fact that you never train alone. We have a multi-player mode, so you can get a group of people together – in the same room, around the world or a combination of the two – and compete against each other on-screen. But even those who don't have anyone to train with will always be competing against the original contributor of the track; an avatar of their own previous best performance if they've completed that track before; up to six other users at a similar level as them; and the best performer on the track to date.

Importantly, anyone else shown on-screen will have logged their time using the same piece of fitness equipment as you; inevitably some brands of equipment are more accurate than others when it comes to measuring power output, and we want to compare like with like.

Can Kinomap also be used in a gym setting?

For gyms, the best use of Kinomap is in a cycling studio: it's a great way of maximising the value of the studio during off-peak times when there aren't any live, instructor-led classes. Gyms can use Kinomap's multi-player mode to allow groups of members to compete against each other, either in scheduled 'public races' or in on-demand 'private races' set up by the members themselves.



+ The Kinomap app can be white labelled for partners

In this scenario, we charge a licence fee per bike rather than per user, and the videos can be downloaded in advance to avoid problems with internet speed.

We're finding it hard to break onto gym floors though, at least at a commercial level, because Kinomap works almost too well: it causes people to be on the cardio kit for longer than gyms' equipment usage models allow. The average time people spend on a treadmill in the gym is 13 minutes; Kinomap users average 38 minutes. Similarly, on indoor bikes, the average usage time is 17 minutes; with Kinomap, it's 42 minutes.

The technology does offer a great opportunity to run tactical marketing events in a gym though: a cycling challenge in the run-up to the Tour de France, for example, or a team run around Central Park when the New York Marathon is coming up. We have enough different tracks around the world that you should be able to find something to match any upcoming event.



► **What future developments are you planning for Kinomap?**

We have a few things we're working on, from slipstreaming technology to making the avatars more realistic.

We're also keen to get more official race footage, so for example you don't just have the chance to cycle the Alpe d'Huez course. You have the chance to cycle that route as part of the Tour de France peloton and get your ranking at the end.

We've already started doing this with the Hammer Series – a new race series for elite cycling teams such as Team Sky, where three races take part in one city over the course of a weekend. We see huge potential in this sort of agreement, both for the end users of Kinomap and for the brands involved in the tour.

Tell us more about this Hammer Series agreement

We've signed an agreement with Infront, which holds the rights to the Hammer Series. As part of this, it asked the pro cycling organisation Velon to film video footage of three races – in Norway, the Netherlands and Hong Kong – with a camera on-board one of the bikes. It then approached us to create an indoor version of the Hammer Series using this footage.

It's a great strategy for Infront for a number of reasons: it keeps the buzz going around the events for far longer than simply the day or week of the race itself; and it gives the participating teams something to involve their fans in

throughout the winter, when there are no races going on. Team Sky, for example, has 800,000 followers on social media – and little to tell them during the winter months. How amazing would it be to offer those fans the chance to take part in a half-hour section of one of the races, racing alongside the likes of Chris Froome – maybe even giving them a ranking compared to him at the end of it?

Once again, we come back to the fact that this isn't virtual reality: it's a real race, indoors.

WE WANT TO SEE INDOOR CYCLING RECOGNISED AS A SPORT: REAL RACES, TAKING PLACE ON REAL TRACKS, INDOORS

What do you see as the future of indoor cycling, and what will be your role in this?

We want to persuade the British Cycling Federation to allow a broader definition of indoor cycling. At the moment, it views indoor cycling as track cycling in a velodrome, but we feel what we deliver is also indoor cycling – not just exercise, but a sport.

If you look at rowing, there's a World Rowing Indoor Championships: a real, competitive event using Concept2 rowers. We want to do the same with indoor cycling.

In fact, we're already seeing this start to happen in places like Paris, where a peloton cycling out on the roads is deemed too much of a terrorist

target; the cycling legs of triathlons now have to take place indoors.

But we want to formalise this. We want to see indoor cycling – using Kinomap technology in conjunction with the most accurate power-based bikes, like Body Bike and Wattbike – recognised as a sport: real races, on real race tracks, indoors. ●



KINOMAP: FACTS & FIGURES

- Kinomap was created by co-founders Philippe Moity and Laurent Desmons.
- The Kinomap community is currently about 200,000 strong, with 30,000 active monthly users.
- Prices start at US\$5 a month on an annual contract, for which you receive unlimited access to all videos on Kinomap.
- Most users use Kinomap at home, with about half choosing Challenge mode and the other half preferring Discovery mode.
- At the moment, cycling accounts for 70 per cent of activity on Kinomap, with running and rowing making up the rest.



Kinomap

FROM ALL OF US, TO ALL OF YOU

Merry Christmas

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR



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