

TWIST

PERFORMANCE + WELLNESS

The Emerging Masters Athlete Market

Twist Business Developer Eric Kristiansen, team captain for the Zen Masterz basketball club, recently competed in the Americas Masters Games and made Canada proud as the team took home both Gold medals in the full-court and 3-on-3 competitions. “It was great to have Twister and Angel Chan out to support our efforts and the knowledge & experience of Dr. Greg Anderson as our Chief Medical Officer throughout the tourney was invaluable” offered Big E. This inaugural 9 day event, held in Vancouver with some 5,000 masters athletes (i.e. women over the age of 30 years, men over 35) had a major impact on the local economy while also enhancing the healthy living options for many community residents.



What makes masters sport events like this so appealing is the majority of participants are in the highly-coveted 45-65 age demographic. These folks are easing into retirement and have time, money and a passion for exercising, for socializing and for being at a point in life where they aspire to, and can afford to, feel special by being a part of something bigger than themselves.

Yet it is hard to fathom how the majority of residents remain (a) well-informed on the benefits of exercise and adopting a healthy lifestyle, (b) know *how* to do this, yet (c) are challenged with adopting healthy habits on a consistent basis. For example Stats Canada, upon using accelerometers for the first time to more accurately measure physical activity (vs. self-reporting), discovered a paltry 8.8% of Canadians aged 20-79 had exercised at least at a moderate intensity for at least 15 minutes a day, five times a week.

That said, there is hope as the masters demographic as, not growing up with all the tech toys of today, most have ample experience as youths playing sports and being active. The reasons why people stopped doing the things they once loved is endless (lack of time/money, weight gain,

family/work duties, low energy/motivation, injuries, active friends moved away, etc.). Yet, given this foundation exists, it means the potential is there to construct strategies designed to get active agers back in touch with their formerly active selves.

Ultimately, to make a significant impact, there must be a shift away from the public perceiving the term 'athlete' as an exclusive, competitive, term and toward the ideal of recreational participation for the masses. True you will find some of hardcore athletes within any masters sport event but, by and large, they are held in the spirit of inclusion and target participants whose priorities are to socialize, meet new people, have fun, enjoy the experience, explore a new part of the world, bond with teammates and engage with competitors who share similar vision and values.

