



MANIFESTO

THE WELLNESS ECONOMY: HEALTH IS WEALTH

EXTRACT FROM THE SPEECH MADE BY NERIO ALESSANDRI
AT THE 20TH WELLNESS CONGRESS, TECHNOGYM VILLAGE OPENING.
CESENA, 29 SEPTEMBER, 2012

More than 20 years ago, when the world was dominated by the fitness culture made of muscles and appearance, at Technogym, a small company founded in a garage in Cesena, we launched Wellness.



Wellness
FOUNDATION

A revolutionary vision, an Italian lifestyle with roots that lie in the philosophy of “*Mens sana in corpore sano*”, a sound mind in a healthy body, coined two thousand years ago in ancient Rome. Wellness is the balance between the body, mind and spirit, and is achieved through regular physical exercise, a healthy diet and a positive mental attitude. Wellness allows us to feel good about ourselves and others, to have more energy and creativity at work and above all live better and longer.

Through Wellness, we have contributed to transforming a business based on hedonism into a sector with a high social impact: from simply appearing well to responsibly feeling well, from the involvement of a tight circle of sportsmen in perfect physical shape to the possibility to involve the whole community: men and women, young people, adults and children, the elderly, the healthy, the sick and the disabled. Together with our partners working in the sector, we have spread the Wellness philosophy around the world. Increasingly more people are convinced that there cannot be sustainable development without personal health: healthy people, healthy planet.

People must return to take a central role, as the masters of the Renaissance taught us. Man is born to move: primitive man, our

ancestors, walked and ran 30 km every day, half a marathon to hunt and search for food for the community. Today our daily movement is way below that, on average 1 km. A sedentary lifestyle triggers social emergency, we live in an epidemic of sedentariness that produces victims and makes us sick.

Chronic diseases, caused by a poor lifestyle made of sedentariness, a poor diet, alcohol and smoking, is the top cause of death in the world, generating more than 35 million premature deaths a year. In 2006, for the first time in the history of the world, overweight people outnumbered the world's hungry. The obesity epidemic no longer affects only the world's so-called advanced countries, but also poorer countries, and the economic crisis is making the situation worse, increasing the consumption of junk food, above all among young people.

This data, together with the constant ageing of the population and the increasing difficulties governments have in funding public health, clearly indicates that the way to fight this 21st century epidemic is education to movement, which can reduce the risk of contracting many diseases by up to 40%. Authoritative international research has underlined how the reduction of cardiovascular diseases by 10% in a country cor-

responds to a 1% increase in GDP.

In Cesena, during the 11th Wellness Congress, in 2003, the Wellness Foundation launched the “*Health is wealth*” message, aiming to spread research and education into healthy life styles.

Wellness is worth it for everyone: Governments, businesses and citizens. Ten years ago, here in Romagna, together with all stakeholders the Foundation promoted the Wellness Valley, the first district working towards wellness, the laboratory of an ecosystem networking businesses, fitness and health operators, public administrations, tourism and the world of education. Internationally, for the past few years Technogym has been a partner of the Davos World Economic Forum health programme, and we contributed to drafting the guidelines on life style, health and prevention that the UN presented to the General Assembly in New York. The recent London 2012 Olympic Games - where Technogym had the honour of being official supplier for the fifth time - were crowned the first Wellness Olympics.

Governments in various countries around the world are showing greater attention to policies that focus on health education. The metrics and rating systems are moving from simply measuring GDP to other indexes

which also consider Wellness and happiness. Physical exercise is a powerful drug: “*Exercise is Medicine*”.

Wellness, that futuristic idea launched 20 years ago by a small company in an Italian province, today represents a huge international trend. We discussed this during the 20th Wellness Congress: “*Let's Move for a better world*”. We invited eminent scientists, new technologies experts, the Italian Minister for Economic Development Corrado Passera, the President of the World Food Programme Ertharin Cousin and Bill Clinton, who has made the fight against childhood obesity a key target of his Foundation. This is our way of offering a contribution. Proposing, doing, not sitting back and waiting!

The Wellness sector is a virtuous one, it is useful for our community! In addition to the wealth it generates by developing and spreading technology and services, it produces inestimable “*social wealth*”. Wealth that can be quantified in terms of personal health, cost savings in the health service, higher productivity and the prospects for a better life.

The sector should be supported by new public and private research projects. Supported by health education and promotion policies in schools, in the community and

in the work place. Supported with appropriate tax policies: wellness is in fact an investment in health, it must be supported by incentives, it is not a luxury to be taxed. It must be enhanced by health policies that shift their focus from care to prevention. Health is certainly a right of the people, but prevention must become a duty, a social responsibility of the individual.

Finally, it must be promoted with a view to policies for economic development with a two-fold result: internally, health and wellness mean greater productivity, externally the "*Wellness product*" can find winning applications in many crucial sectors of the economy.

Institutions, sector operators, insurance companies, businesses, the medical world, citizens, let us join together to build a dream, the Wellness Economy, a better world that starts with personal health.

LET'S MOVE FOR A BETTER WORLD

Nerio Alessandri

Founder and chairman of Technogym®



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