



RECOGNITION REPORT · 2026

THE YEAR OF BECOMING

THE NEXT 26

26 Visionary Coaches Shaping What's Next

The future of coaching isn't coming. These 26 are already building it.

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CLASS OF 2026

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Next 26 recognizes the coaches shaping what the profession becomes: builders, innovators, connectors, performers, educators and changemakers.

One overall winner and twenty-five finalists, selected from nominations and applications submitted across the Coach360 community. They are not being recognized for arriving somewhere. They are being recognized for what they are still building.

THE NEXT 26 MANIFESTO

The future of coaching is not a distant idea. It is being built every day in sessions, studios, facilities, online communities, classrooms, and conversations that begin with a simple question: What does this person need from me now?

The coaches in this report understand that great coaching is more than a program, a workout, or a result on a scoreboard. It is the ability to see what people can become before they can see it for themselves. It is the work of building confidence, creating accountability, earning trust, and making health, performance, and belonging feel possible.

Coach360 created The Next 26 to recognize the people helping define the next era of the profession. Some are building new businesses and career paths. Some are changing how coaching

is delivered through technology and personalization. Others are creating communities, raising standards, developing coaches, or widening the reach of the work itself.

They do not share one specialty, one business model, or one definition of success. What they share is direction. Each is moving coaching forward in a way that matters to the people they serve and to the profession that follows.

**THESE ARE NOT RANKINGS. THEY ARE SIGNALS
OF WHERE COACHING IS GOING NEXT.**



A LETTER FROM OUR CEO & FOUNDER

THIS HAS BEEN OUR YEAR OF BECOMING

Dear Coach360 Community,

When we chose those words for Coach360, I knew what they meant to me personally and what I hoped they would mean for our community. But over the course of this year, I've realized that becoming isn't always the beautiful part of the story.

Sometimes it's hard.

There is struggle in becoming. There are setbacks, doubts, pivots, risks that don't work out and moments when you question whether you are even moving in the right direction. I think that is true for all of us, no matter how successful someone may look from the outside.

And maybe that is exactly where vision matters most.

Being a visionary doesn't mean you have everything figured out. It means you can see beyond where you are today. You can imagine what could be better, different or possible, and you are

willing to keep moving toward it even when the path isn't completely clear.

That is what I see in the 26 coaches we are recognizing this year.

They are builders, innovators, connectors, performers, educators and changemakers. They are creating businesses and communities, finding new ways to use technology, developing other coaches, pushing human performance forward and expanding what coaching can look like and who it can reach.

But they are also people.

They have struggled. They have changed direction. They have questioned themselves. They have had to learn, adapt and grow. They are not being recognized because they have reached some final destination.

They are being recognized because they are still becoming.

I think that distinction matters.

When I started Coach360, I wanted to build something that gave coaches more visibility, more opportunity and a bigger voice in this industry. Coaches spend their careers helping other people become. Stronger. Healthier. More confident. More capable. Sometimes they help someone become a version of themselves they couldn't see yet.

I know firsthand how powerful that can be.

This year, we wanted to turn that same question back toward the coaches themselves. Who are they becoming? What are they building? What do they see for this profession that perhaps the rest of us don't see yet?

That is where The Next 26 came from.

These 26 people do not share one definition of success or one vision for the future. That is what makes this group so interesting. What they share is a willingness to look ahead and then do the work required to move toward what they see. This year's report is about the coaches who are not simply succeeding within the profession as it exists today, but actively shaping what it becomes next.

To everyone who applied, nominated a coach, voted, partnered with us or supported this recognition, thank you. And to our Top 26 Most Visionary Coaches of 2026, congratulations.

My hope is that when you read their stories, you don't just see 26 incredible coaches. I hope you see pieces of your own story too.

The struggle. The growth. The uncertainty. The vision.
The becoming.

MAYBE BEING A VISIONARY ISN'T ABOUT KNOWING EXACTLY WHERE YOU'LL END UP. MAYBE IT'S ABOUT BEING BRAVE ENOUGH TO SEE WHAT COULD BE NEXT.

Because none of us are finished. With love and gratitude,



KATHLEEN FERGUSON

CEO & FOUNDER, COACH360

THE CLASS OF 2026

ALL TWENTY-SIX

Listed by category, alphabetically within each. Full profiles begin on page 09.

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VISIONARY OF THE YEAR



THE OVERALL WINNER · 2026

DELANEY WOOD

Performance & Lifestyle Coach · Founder, Strong Sis Squad LLC · Scottsdale, AZ

A coach whose measure of success is the client who no longer needs her — educated, confident and trusting their own decisions.

DELANEY WOOD

Performance & Lifestyle Coach · Founder, Strong Sis Squad LLC · Scottsdale, AZ

CHANGEMAKER

6 YEARS COACHING

Most coaching businesses are built on retention. Delaney Wood built hers on graduation — teaching clients the why behind every adjustment until they can make the call themselves. That is the vision that earned the top spot.

Delaney Wood is the founder and head coach of Strong Sis Squad LLC in Scottsdale, Arizona, a performance and lifestyle coaching practice with an unusual stated goal. “My goal has never been to create clients who rely on me forever,” she says. “It’s to equip them with the knowledge, confidence, and tools to become their own strongest advocate.”

In practice that means coaching that educates. Every adjustment to training or nutrition comes with its reasoning, so clients learn to read their own progress rather than wait for instructions. Her clients learn to read their own progress, adjust with confidence and keep going without waiting for permission.

Wood is clear that the most important change is not the one on the scale. The transformation she points to is the client who no longer fears food and trusts their own decisions.

Growth has been the hardest test of that idea. “The hardest part has been learning how to grow Strong Sis Squad without losing what makes it special in the first place,” Wood says. “I built this business

around genuinely knowing the people I coach. I care about their goals, but I also care deeply about the person behind those goals.” As the business has grown, she has had to learn how to expand her reach while protecting that level of intention and connection.

Her approach points at where coaching is heading: away from dependency as a business model and toward clients who leave more capable than they arrived. Next, she wants Strong Sis Squad to grow into a community that changes how people view strength and coaching, “where education creates independence, strength creates confidence and people realize they’re capable of setting a completely new standard for themselves.” The goal is to reach more people without losing the individualized coaching and genuine connection the community was built on. “That’s the standard I want to keep raising.”

It is also why she is this year’s Visionary of the Year. In a report about coaches who are still becoming, Wood measures her own success by how fully her clients become their own strongest advocates.

“MY GOAL HAS NEVER BEEN TO CREATE CLIENTS WHO RELY ON ME FOREVER.”

DELANEY WOOD

6 Years coaching

200+ Clients coached, in person and online

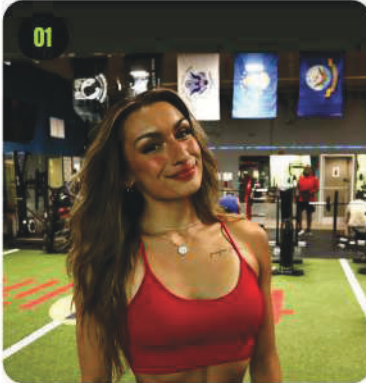
2020 Overall Wellness title in bodybuilding, then a move into powerlifting

THE BUILDERS

SECTION 01 OF 06

The Builders see their expertise as a starting point. They create programs, teams, communities, brands, and business models that give more people access to meaningful support.

Their work shows that a sustainable coaching career depends on more than personal hustle. It requires clear systems, a strong client experience, and the willingness to turn knowledge into an operation that can grow without losing its human center.



ANDRIA BROWN

IFBB Fit Model Pro | Founder, CoachAndria Inc. & the FitModelNoFilter Podcast

WHO THEY ARE IFBB Fit Model Pro and founder of CoachAndria Inc., coaching beginners through to competitors on posing, lifestyle and discipline.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A business built on a relentless mindset framework — helping people become their best selves one step at a time — with the FitModelNoFilter podcast as its second channel.

WHY IT MATTERS The platform doubles as a megaphone for philanthropic need: she uses fitness to elevate foster care children across the US.

"From nothing to everything. Teaching others how to be relentless — helping people become their best selves one step at a time."

FOCUS AREAS **PHYSIQUE COACHING** **PHILANTHROPY**



LAUREN CALANDRILLA

Studio Owner | SDG Fitness Studio | Charleston, IL

WHO THEY ARE Founder of a women-only strength training studio, and a trainer and instructor who challenges the industry's traditional definition of success.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A coaching model measured by lasting behavior change, strength, confidence and everyday-life improvement rather than scale weight or before-and-after photos.

WHY IT MATTERS She proves a purpose-built studio can thrive without chasing every trend — and shares the realities of building one, in real time, with coaches just starting out.

"True transformation is measured not by smaller bodies, but by bigger lives."

FOCUS AREAS **WOMEN'S STRENGTH** **STUDIO OWNERSHIP**

THE BUILDERS — "TRUE TRANSFORMATION IS MEASURED NOT BY SMALLER BODIES, BUT BY BIGGER LIVES."

LAUREN CALANDRILLA



03 FAITHLYN DERLA

Founder | Trained by Faith

WHO THEY ARE IFBB Pro athlete, entrepreneur, model and founder of Trained by Faith, who earned her IFBB Pro Card and Overall Fit Model title at NPC Nationals in Texas.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A performance-driven coaching platform built on sustainable habits, discipline and mindset rather than quick fixes — plus ventures across content creation and fashion.

WHY IT MATTERS Her nominator describes the ripple effect: clients become more confident spouses, parents, leaders and friends. She has not simply built stronger bodies, but stronger people.

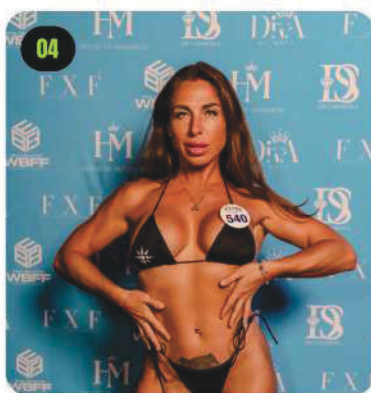
"Coaches are able to maximize retention when clients feel seen and are aware that despite the group setting, their own individual goals are still being achieved."

— AS TOLD TO COACH360

FOCUS AREAS

BODYBUILDING

COMMUNITY



04 TETIANA KOMAROVA

Personal Trainer | Fitness Coach | Choreographer

WHO THEY ARE Personal trainer, coach and choreographer with more than 15 years across personal training, physical education, competitive fitness, media and community wellness — first in Ukraine, now in the United States.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A coaching philosophy built from rebuilding her own career from the ground up, spanning different countries, cultures, ages and fitness levels.

WHY IT MATTERS She shows that age, circumstances and starting point do not define what a person can become.

"Fitness is a tool for reinvention. Your age, circumstances, or starting point do not define what you can become. Adapt, rebuild, stay strong, and keep moving forward."

FOCUS AREAS

REINVENTION

GROUP FITNESS



05 MARLEY MALUAFITI

Owner & Operator | Rec Room LV | Las Vegas, Nevada

WHO THEY ARE Owner and operator of Rec Room LV in Las Vegas, Nevada.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A gym built on individualized programming, where attention to detail is the product.

WHY IT MATTERS Clients get knowledge and care in equal measure — patience as a coaching method.

"Her patience and attention to detail with programming for each of her clients are filled with knowledge and care."

FOCUS AREAS

GYM OWNERSHIP

PROGRAMMING

BEYOND THE SESSION

The coaching relationship does not end when the session does. Clients make decisions, ask questions, miss workouts, build habits, and need support in the hours and days between appointments. The connected coach creates continuity across that full experience.

That is where the next phase of coaching is taking shape. Digital communication, personalized programming, client data, and in-facility touchpoints can help coaches stay present without being perpetually on call. The best use of technology, after all, is to make the relationship more responsive, consistent, and useful.

The honorees in this report who work this way describe the same shift. They are not adding channels. They are removing decisions — what gets checked, when, and what actually requires a human reply. The coach still makes the call; the system just stops making them hunt for the reason to.

That is the test we would apply to any of it: does this tell you which client needs a phone call on Tuesday, or does it only tell you that a lot of clients exist? Automation that produces more dashboards is not continuity. Automation that produces one good conversation is.

Partner note — FitMetrics, now part of ABC Trainerize, applies that test to the two tasks that eat most coaches' evenings: check-ins and meal logs. It reviews them in the background and flags what needs a human reply, so a growing client list does not have to cost the relationship.

WHAT TO WATCH

Continuity between sessions, without always-on coaching.

AI that reviews check-ins and meal logs, and surfaces the client who needs a call this week.

Programming that adapts to a real week, not an ideal one.

THE MEASURE OF A CONNECTED PRACTICE IS HOW LITTLE OF THE RELATIONSHIP DEPENDS ON THE COACH BEING AVAILABLE AT THAT EXACT MOMENT.



VI-SION-ARY

(adj.): thinks ahead, plans further, builds first.

TO THE 26 MOST VISIONARY COACHES OF 2026, AND EVERY COACH WHO THINKS THE SAME WAY.

Coaches like you don't build a business to spend nights on check-ins and meal logs. FitMetrics, now a part of ABC Trainerize, handles that busywork in the background, so growing your client list doesn't mean losing the relationship that made you want to coach in the first place.

The result: more clients, stronger relationships, and evenings that are actually yours again.



**Scan to see
how it works**

THE INNOVATORS

SECTION 02 OF 06

Innovation in coaching is the search for a better way to understand people, personalize support, solve a practical problem, or create a more useful experience.

The Innovators challenge familiar assumptions about how coaching should look. They bring new methods, smarter delivery models, sharper feedback loops, and a willingness to test what works. Their work makes the profession more adaptable without losing the judgment and empathy that technology cannot replace.



MATHIEU BOLILLO

Fitness Coach, Author & Inventor | BOLIFIT | Las Vegas, NV

WHO THEY ARE Fitness coach, author and inventor, and the creator of the BOLIFIT device.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A training method built around the device that incorporates holistic aspects and techniques — recently drawing interest from the medical field after a client with MS made significant improvements using it.

WHY IT MATTERS His book, *Unleashing the Handstand in You*, treats handstand drills as a way to work through fear; conquering the fear of inverting as a reflection of fear in life.

"Handstand drills are channeling and resolve tremendous physical and psychological problems."

FOCUS AREAS **INNOVATION** **HOLISTIC TRAINING**



GIANCARLO PALLERO

Life, Health & Fitness Coach

WHO THEY ARE Life, health and fitness coach who has worked with thousands of clients across all walks of life.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A holistic model spanning mental, physical, emotional, existential, relational, socio-environmental and mastery dimensions of health.

WHY IT MATTERS He treats fitness as one entry point into a whole life, not the whole of it.

"My mission is to help people optimize their health and fitness by aiding them to commence their inside-out metamorphosis."

FOCUS AREAS **HOLISTIC HEALTH** **LIFE COACHING**

THE INNOVATORS – “HELP PEOPLE COMMENCE THEIR INSIDE-OUT METAMORPHOSIS.”

GIANCARLO PALLERO



SHEREEN TALJEBINI

Strength & Conditioning Coach | Monarch Athletic Club, South Beach | Miami, FL

WHO THEY ARE Strength and conditioning coach and hybrid athlete with a master's in Applied Physiology and eight years across CrossFit, strength and conditioning and youth athletics — coaching in English and Spanish.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Lab-grade assessment — VO₂ max, DEXA, movement screening — brought into everyday coaching for everyday people.

WHY IT MATTERS She competes in what she coaches, so clients get a living example that resilience is trained, not given.

"Training is a practice of self-agency, and every person deserves a coach who treats their goals as seriously as an athlete's."

FOCUS AREAS **APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY** **HYBRID PERFORMANCE**



REBEKKA TUCKER

Founder & Performance Mobility Specialist | BekksFit LLC | Orange County, CA

WHO THEY ARE Coach, mobility specialist and business owner, also a fitness competitor who programs for athletes.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING An approach that merges rehab and training — intelligent mobility work plus homework clients can actually do between sessions.

WHY IT MATTERS She is innovating in the rehab space while being an uplifting source of energy for an entire gym.

"The most caring, attentive, dedicated, talented coach I have ever worked with. The level of care she gives is unmatched."

FOCUS AREAS **MOBILITY** **REHAB & PERFORMANCE**

THE INNOVATORS – "TRAINING IS A PRACTICE OF SELF-AGENCY."

SHEREEN TALJEBINI

THE BUSINESS OF COACHING

If the client-facing app is one half of the stack, this is the other: the operator layer the member never sees. Memberships, billing, scheduling, staffing, reporting and access all shape whether great coaching can reach one person or many — and whether the organization around the coach stays solvent enough to keep them.

The next generation of coaching businesses will be defined by the ability to protect the relationship while building the infrastructure around it. The goal is to reduce the friction that keeps coaches from doing their best work and clients from staying connected to it.

Our read at Coach360 is that retention is usually an operations problem wearing a motivation costume. Clients rarely leave because the

coaching was wrong. They leave because a payment failed, a session never got rebooked, or nothing followed the hour they paid for. Those are fixable, and fixing them is not a marketing exercise.

The coaches building durable practices this year are the ones who decided what they would stop doing manually, then chose infrastructure around that decision — not the other way around. The tool matters far less than the clarity about which hour of the week it gives back.

Partner note — Daxko works on that consolidation across the industry: booking, member and staff management, workout delivery, payments and trainer commissions inside one branded experience.

WHAT TO WATCH

Retention as a design problem, not a marketing one.

Pay models that reward development, not just sales.

Consolidation: four tools becoming one client-facing experience.

**THE OPERATIONAL LAYER IS
INVISIBLE WHEN IT WORKS.
COACHES NOTICE IT ONLY WHEN
IT BREAKS.**



DAXKO.COM



Build hard. Run easy.

Your passion is the point. The back office isn't.

Scheduling, payments, programming,
communication should grow as you do – whether
in your room, your app, or across every location.

One partner alongside you, not a ticket queue.
Your data comes with you the whole way.

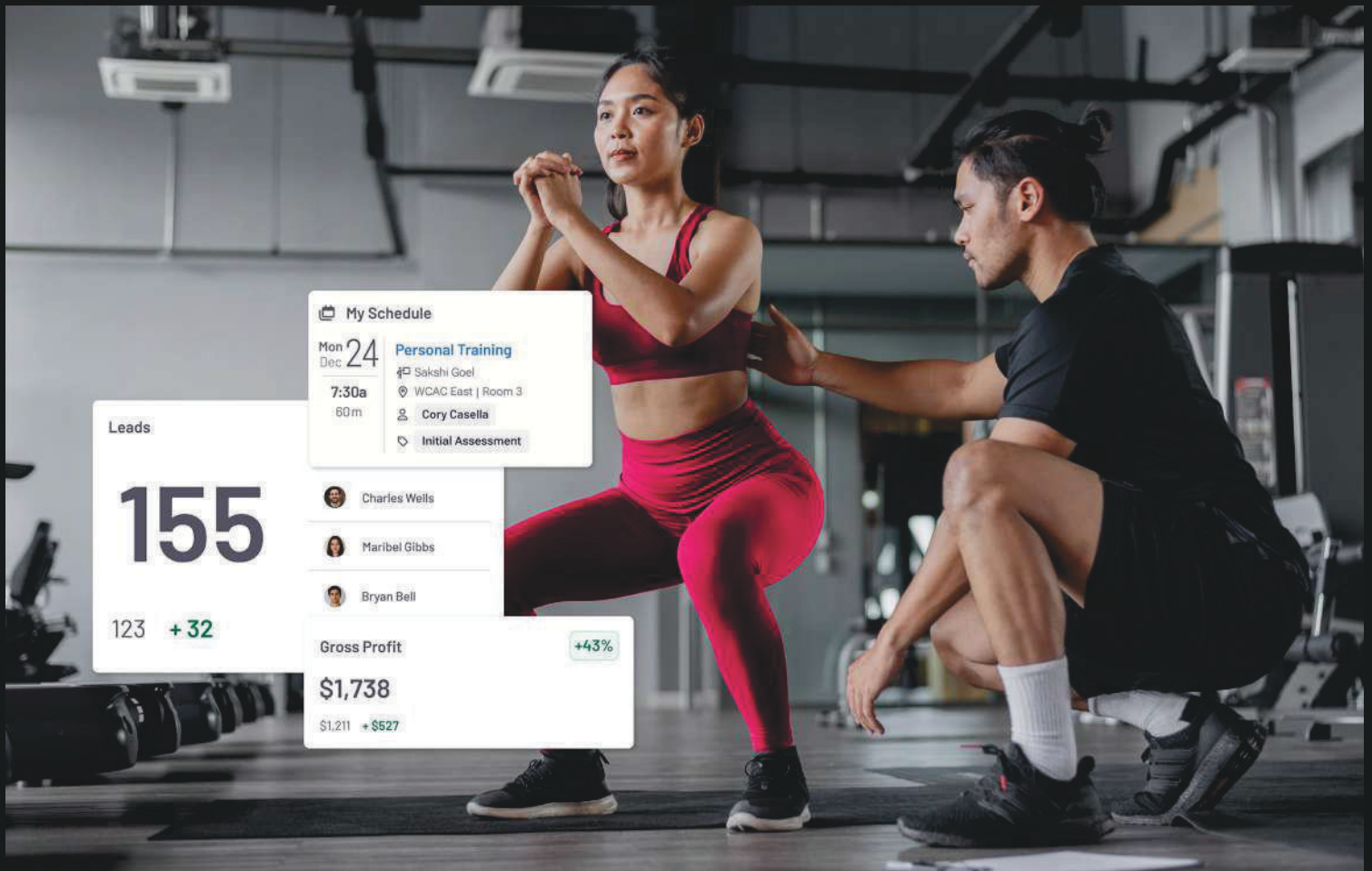
Find the fit for how you run →



19,000
facilities



68
countries



THE CONNECTORS

SECTION 03 OF 06

The Connectors understand that belonging, trust, and accountability are not extras in the coaching experience, but part of the work itself.

These honorees build spaces where people feel seen. They create rituals, conversations, and communities that make health and performance more sustainable. Their impact often reaches beyond the individual client because they help people find a reason to keep showing up for themselves and for one another.



10

DELILAH BANKS

Bikini Bodybuilder & Wellness Coach | EOS Fitness / Independent | Phoenix, AZ

WHO THEY ARE Bikini bodybuilder, group fitness instructor and wellness coach who brings competition-stage energy to the group fitness floor.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A class experience that fuses elite-level lifting mechanics with the electric, sweat-dripping energy of a group room — and a ride-or-die team culture around it.

WHY IT MATTERS Members do not just show up; they step into their own spotlight, and every victory gets celebrated out loud.

"I throw out the boring, generic workout blueprint and replace it with explosive, stage-worthy energy. My mission is to build a community that doesn't just show up, but steps into their own spotlight."

FOCUS AREAS

GROUP FITNESS

BODYBUILDING



11

GIOVANNY CORONEL

Fitness Director, Hardcore Fitness El Cajon | Owner, Strength in the City | San Diego, CA

WHO THEY ARE Fitness director bringing a gym community together through genuine connection and attention to detail across classes, personal training and wellness events.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Membership growth built on belonging — programming and events designed so people find their people, not just their workout.

WHY IT MATTERS Community is the retention strategy. When members connect with each other, they stay.

"The goal is to help people find the space where they can connect with people and find their community."

FOCUS AREAS

COMMUNITY

FITNESS DIRECTION

THE CONNECTORS – “HELP PEOPLE FIND THE SPACE WHERE THEY CAN CONNECT AND FIND THEIR COMMUNITY.”

GIOVANNY CORONEL

12



CAMERON TENDLER

Fitness Coach | EoS Fitness | Las Vegas, NV

WHO THEY ARE Master coach at EoS Fitness, known for meeting clients as people first.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Individualized programming built on listening — adapting around injuries, concerns and real progress rather than a one-size-fits-all plan.

WHY IT MATTERS One client lost 120 pounds, placed top 20 in the EoS Submit Your Fit contest and finished her first half marathon.

"There are coaches who help people reach fitness goals, and then there are coaches who change lives. Coach Cam changed mine."

FOCUS AREAS **PERSONAL TRAINING** **TRANSFORMATION**

13



STEPHANIE WEIGEL

Fitness Coach & Instructor | Founder, Energy Raisers | Las Vegas, NV

WHO THEY ARE Fitness coach and instructor with 25 years in the industry, founder of Energy Raisers; teaches strength, Pilates, yoga and everything in between.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A practice built on the idea that fitness has become too serious — the workout is only part of it.

WHY IT MATTERS People leave feeling more like themselves than when they walked in.

"I want people to get strong, sweat, laugh, take up space and actually have a good time doing it. I'm not interested in making people smaller, quieter or more perfect."

FOCUS AREAS **GROUP FITNESS** **CULTURE**

THE CONNECTORS – "I'M NOT INTERESTED IN MAKING PEOPLE SMALLER, QUIETER OR MORE PERFECT."

STEPHANIE WEIGEL

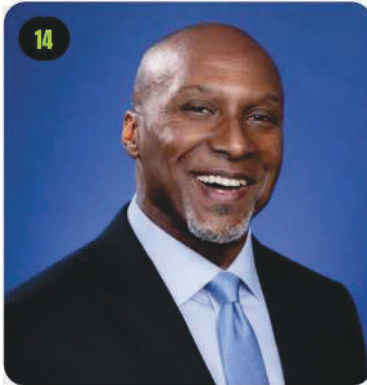
THE PERFORMERS

SECTION 04 OF 06

The Performers bring discipline and perspective to the work. They understand that progress is rarely linear, that recovery and fueling influence readiness, and that meaningful results come

from repeated decisions made over time.

Their coaching helps people pursue more without losing sight of why the work matters.



14

DAVID KEY

CXO | Key Body & Fitness Corp. | Columbus, Ohio

WHO THEY ARE Owner and CEO of Key Body & Fitness Corp. with 32 years in human performance — former NFL player, IFBB Pro bodybuilder, K1 Pro kickboxer, BS in Kinesiology, University of Michigan.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A science-backed, deeply personalized practice for busy professionals aged 40 to 70 who were told their best days were behind them.

WHY IT MATTERS His 73-year-old client, a heart-attack survivor, is now in the best shape of her life. He is reshaping belief systems as much as bodies.

"Longevity, strength, and vitality are not privileges reserved for the young. I am not following fitness trends. I am setting the standard."

FOCUS AREAS

LONGEVITY

MIDLIFE PERFORMANCE



15

JASEN ONO

Fitness Supervisor, IFBB Pro Bodybuilder, Contest Prep & Lifestyle Coach | Canyon Ranch Spa | Henderson, NV

WHO THEY ARE "Da Hawaiian Sensation" — Hawai'i's first Asian IFBB Pro heavyweight, contest prep and lifestyle coach, and Fitness Supervisor at Canyon Ranch Spa, Las Vegas.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Coaching that carries his own healing work into the prep room: he went through the Landmark Program and private coaching to pursue bodybuilding without body shaming himself or letting body dysmorphia derail him.

WHY IT MATTERS He wants clients to push the boundaries of what they can achieve in every part of life — and to love themselves without over-analyzing what others think.

"I want to help others love themselves without over-analyzing what others think about them. I went through my own healing journey. I want that for other people as well."

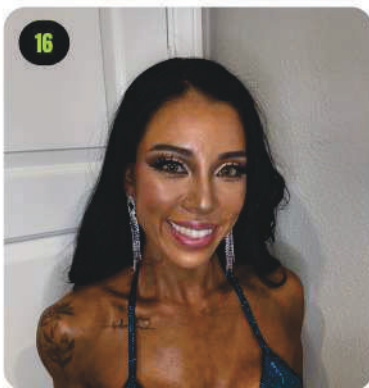
FOCUS AREAS

COMPETITION PREP

MINDSET & BODY IMAGE

THE PERFORMERS — "LONGEVITY, STRENGTH AND VITALITY ARE NOT PRIVILEGES RESERVED FOR THE YOUNG."

DAVID KEY



16

LUNA TO

Fitness & Mindset Coach | Co-Founder & Head Coach, AL:VE Athletics | Orange County, CA

WHO THEY ARE Fitness and mindset coach, competitor and co-founder of AL:VE Athletics in Orange County — MS-credentialed, coaching both competition prep and lifestyle clients.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A practice that treats mindset as the primary training variable: helping clients tap into their truest self through fitness rather than shaping them to an external standard.

WHY IT MATTERS Her line to clients is a directive, not a slogan: be a creator of your own reality.

"Be a creator of your own reality."

FOCUS AREAS **MINDSET** **COMPETITION PREP**



17

TAMIKA TUCKER

IFBB Figure Pro & Founder | TamikaTFitness

WHO THEY ARE IFBB Figure Pro, former collegiate All-American athlete and head coach at TamikaTFitness.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A coaching community spanning lifestyle transformations to competitive bodybuilding, pairing evidence-based training and nutrition with accountability and leadership.

WHY IT MATTERS Her athletes have earned victories, overall titles and pro-level achievements — but the goal is confidence and discipline that carry into every area of their lives.

"My goal is not simply to produce great physiques. It's to develop stronger, more confident people who realize their potential is greater than they imagined."

FOCUS AREAS **PHYSIQUE COACHING** **ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT**

THE PERFORMERS — "BE A CREATOR OF YOUR OWN REALITY."

LUNA TO

WHAT FUELS PERFORMANCE

Every coach understands the challenge of consistency. The people they serve are balancing training with work, family, travel, and the realities of daily life. Performance is built in those ordinary moments as much as it is built in a workout — and most of those moments have nothing to do with the gym.

Fueling is the obvious entry point, and the easiest one to oversimplify. What a client eats matters, but so does when they stop working, how they sleep, how they come down after a hard day, and how much decision-making they have left by the evening. Refueling is physical, mental, and emotional at once. A coach who only programs the training half is coaching half the person.

That is why the honorees in this report keep describing their work in wider terms than sets and macros. They are asking about sleep, stress,

schedule, and support before they touch the program. Holistic is an overused word, but the practical version of it is narrow and useful: find the constraint outside the session that is capping progress inside it, and coach that.

And when it does come back to food, what we hear from coaches is less about optimization and more about tolerance. The protein a client actually finishes beats the one with better macros sitting in the pantry. The useful question is not what is optimal, but what is repeatable at 4pm on a bad day — and whether the client can read the label and recognize the food in it.

Partner note — Linear Bar built its product around that standard: USDA Organic Certified ingredients, 20g of protein from organic whey isolate, no seed oils, no artificial sweeteners — made to be the default a client reaches for rather than the one they tolerate.

WHAT TO WATCH

Fueling that survives travel, shift work and family weeks.

Sleep and recovery written into the program, not bolted on.

Mental load: fewer daily decisions, better default choices.

**CONSISTENCY IS RARELY A
WILLPOWER PROBLEM. IT IS
USUALLY A LOGISTICS PROBLEM
WEARING A WILLPOWER COSTUME.**

LINEAR

LINEARBAR.COM

***"I always wondered why
no one had created a clean
ingredient protein bar that***

actually tasted amazing - until I discovered Linear Protein Bar.

Your clients will love the taste and can trust what's inside."

Kim Lyons

Former Trainer for NBC's
The Biggest Loser

**Bite
Into
Better**



- USDA Organic
- 20G Protein

- 7-10G Fiber
- No Seed Oils or Artificials

Learn more at **linearbar.com**

THE EDUCATORS

SECTION 05 OF 06

The Educators develop other coaches, clarify complex ideas, and raise the standard of care across the field.

Their influence can appear in mentorship, certification, content, team leadership, or the quiet example they set in every interaction. They prove that expertise is a responsibility to keep learning, sharing, and making the next coach better prepared than the last.



BARRY & SHAY KOSTABI

Co-Founders | Fitcarma | Costa Mesa, California

WHO THEY ARE Brand strategist and experience designer behind Fitcarma, working with boutique fitness leaders on the experience around the workout.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Barry helps leaders articulate the beliefs their businesses stand for; Shay turns those beliefs into coaching, class design and instructor development people can feel.

WHY IT MATTERS Their impact multiplies because they coach the people who shape cultures — one studio owner influences a team, one instructor influences hundreds.

"It is not the client's job to want fitness more. It is the coach's responsibility to create the conditions in which trust, courage, curiosity, and commitment can grow."

FOCUS AREAS **BRAND & EXPERIENCE** **LEADERSHIP**



BEN LUDWIG

COO, OHM Fitness HQ | Director of Consulting, APEX Wellness | Nederland, TX

WHO THEY ARE Owner, consultant, speaker and writer, published nearly 100 times in fitness business magazines and presenting globally on leadership, culture, operations and performance.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Open-source playbooks: mentorship cohorts, industry panels, board seats and fractional work with companies redefining fit tech and boutique fitness culture.

WHY IT MATTERS He gives away what most operators guard, on the belief that a more transparent industry is a better one.

"To leave the fitness industry better than we found it — through openly sharing playbooks, speaking, writing, and being part of organizations that challenge what the industry can be in the future."

FOCUS AREAS **OPERATIONS** **INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP**

THE EDUCATORS — "IT IS NOT THE CLIENT'S JOB TO WANT FITNESS MORE."

BARRY & SHAY KOSTABI



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PATRICK LYONS

Founder & CEO | OFCA, Lyon Shred & Hawaii Fitness Retreat | Austin, TX

WHO THEY ARE Evidence-based online coach, bodybuilder, creator and documentary filmmaker in Austin, Texas — 800+ online clients and 2,000+ in-person clients to date.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING The Online Fitness Coach Academy, a certification spanning 554 topics and more than 5,000 published studies, plus documentary series on natural bodybuilding and his road to HYROX Worlds.

WHY IT MATTERS He puts the research and the receipts in public, then shows what the pursuit actually costs.

"I'm a student of the scientific literature around all things fitness and share findings with my audience daily."

FOCUS AREAS

COACH EDUCATION

CONTENT & MEDIA



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JESSICA H. MAURER

Professional Speaker & Consultant | JHM Fitness | Winter Garden, FL

WHO THEY ARE Speaker, author and coach's coach; Director of Education for the Mental Wellbeing Association and 2026 IDEA Leader of the Year, after two decades inside the industry she now works to change.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING A coaching philosophy built on mental wellbeing rather than punishment — plus mentorship that teaches coaches to tell burnout from boredom and build careers with longevity.

WHY IT MATTERS Change how one coach sees their role and you change every client they will ever reach.

"A coach is not a prescriber. A coach is a matchmaker. The best exercise in the world is the one a person will genuinely return to."

FOCUS AREAS

MENTAL WELLBEING

COACH DEVELOPMENT

THE EDUCATORS – "A COACH IS NOT A PRESCRIBER. A COACH IS A MATCHMAKER."

JESSICA H. MAURER

THE CHANGEMAKERS

SECTION 06 OF 06

The Changemakers expand the definition of who coaching can reach and what it can accomplish. They make room for people who have been overlooked, underserved, or told that fitness was not for them.

Their work connects coaching with wider outcomes: confidence, access, health, leadership, recovery, community, and opportunity. By changing who feels welcome and what support looks like, they help the profession become more useful to more people.



LUIS AGUIRRE

Founder | SAVOIR Wellness | Puerto Vallarta, México

WHO THEY ARE Has worked across education, coaching, industry and public-sector sport, collaborating with ISSA, NASM, AFAA and NCSF in Latin America, and through municipal sport and community initiatives.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING SAVOIR in Puerto Vallarta — an ecosystem rather than a service, connecting coaching, education, nutrition, recovery, physical therapy, technology and community around older adults, people managing health challenges and international retirees.

WHY IT MATTERS The goal is not a stronger client but a more independent one: preserving confidence, capability and quality of life for as long as possible, and treating aging as an opportunity rather than a limitation.

"A great coach should not only change how someone trains; they should change what that person believes is possible for their own life."

FOCUS AREAS **ACTIVE AGING** **ACCESS & EDUCATION**



RUBEN P. THICKSTUN

Founder & CEO, Functionally Evolved | Active Aging Specialist | Seattle, WA

WHO THEY ARE Active aging specialist, international presenter and author; 2024 IDEA World Emerging Trailblazer of the Year and a 2026 IDEA World Instructor of the Year finalist.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Functionally Evolved — programming, education and on-demand content for senior living communities worldwide, blending strength, mobility, balance, power, reaction time and cognitive fitness with seated, supported and standing options in the same class.

WHY IT MATTERS He works at multiple levels at once: participants, the professionals who serve them, and the organizations that employ them — challenging ageism across the industry.

"Older adults deserve more than exercise programs built around limitations. Aging is not about limitations. It is about possibilities."

FOCUS AREAS **ACTIVE AGING** **COACH EDUCATION**

THE CHANGEMAKERS — "AGING IS NOT ABOUT LIMITATIONS. IT IS ABOUT POSSIBILITIES."

RUBEN P. THICKSTUN



TYLER SMITH

Owner & Coach | Creator of the NeuroArc™ Training System

WHO THEY ARE Owner and coach specializing in exercise for individuals with autism.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING The NeuroArc™ Training System — a structured, measurable framework built on Awareness, Regulation and Control, with assessment and progress tracking for every athlete.

WHY IT MATTERS Families see gains that carry beyond the gym into school, sport and home. He is building a model coaches, therapists and educators can adopt.

"What if exercise could do more than improve physical fitness? What if it could improve the way individuals with autism move, build confidence, develop independence, and function in everyday life?"

FOCUS AREAS **AUTISM FITNESS** **SYSTEMS & CERTIFICATION**



ASHTON WRAY

Director of Operations & Education, Level IV Paralysis Recovery Specialist | The Perfect Step | Pomona, CA

WHO THEY ARE For nearly 13 years she has helped clients at The Perfect Step navigate recovery after life-changing accidents and neurological diagnoses, rising from Aide to Specialist to Director.

WHAT THEY ARE BUILDING Coaching where no two clients, diagnoses or sessions are the same — work that demands creativity, patience and the willingness to find a different approach when something isn't working.

WHY IT MATTERS The reward goes beyond physical progress: helping someone rediscover what they are capable of, and believe a meaningful life still lies ahead.

"It is an honor to be a source of light during some of the darkest moments in a person's life."

FOCUS AREAS **PARALYSIS RECOVERY** **NEURO REHAB**

THE CHANGEMAKERS – “WHAT IF EXERCISE COULD DO MORE THAN IMPROVE PHYSICAL FITNESS?”

TYLER SMITH



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IN CLOSING

WHAT THE NEXT 26 SIGNALS

The Next 26 tells us coaching is becoming broader, more connected, and more consequential. The work now lives across facilities, digital communities, independent businesses, teams, and partnerships that did not exist in the same form a generation ago.

But the profession's center remains human. Coaches build trust before they build results. They translate knowledge into action, and create the conditions that help people keep going when motivation alone is not enough.

The future will bring more tools, more data, and more ways to deliver support. The coaches who shape that future well will use those tools to make the work more personal, not less. They will build careers that last because they keep their clients, communities, and fellow coaches at the center of the decision.

That is what The Next 26 represents: living examples of what becomes possible when skill, service, and direction meet.

STILL BECOMING.

THE NEXT 26 · CLASS OF 2026

THANK YOU

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2026

Congratulations to the 2026 Coach360 Top 26 Most Visionary Coaches. Thank you to every coach who applied, every person who nominated someone they believe in, and every member of the Coach360 community who continues to raise the standard of this profession.

Coach360 also thanks Daxko, Trainerize, and Linear Bar for supporting conversations about the systems, tools, and daily habits that help coaches do their best work.

OUR PARTNERS



Follow Coach360 for the full honoree rollout, community-voting updates, and the stories shaping what comes next.
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THE NEXT 26 · CLASS OF 2026

NONE OF US ARE **FINISHED**

To the Top 26 Most Visionary Coaches of 2026 — and to everyone still becoming — congratulations.



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