

Lindsay Merrithew: Directing and Growing the Fully Integrated Business from a Visionary and Strategic Point of View

Top 10 Most Optimistic CEOs to Watch in 2022



Any fitness enthusiast or professional who has taken a Pilates class is likely to have been taught by or used **Merrithew®** equipment. Each product's superior quality has established the company as a clear leader in the global fitness industry. Lindsay Merrithew has been working toward this goal since co-founding the company with Moira Merrithew in 1988.

Since their humble beginnings with a single Pilates studio in Toronto, Canada, and equipment they designed and manufactured themselves, Merrithew has educated nearly 70,000 instructors in over 100 countries. It also collaborates with over 40 international equipment distributors and resellers.

While Merrithew is pleased with the company's financial success, he is most proud of the larger team's impact in helping people of all fitness levels and abilities improve the quality of their lives through mindful movement.

Lindsay reflects on the company's humble beginnings, the strategy that has shaped its global expansion, and the role that mind-body connection has played. Merrithew is encouraged that mindful movement is assisting so many people in improving their performance, dealing with stress, and becoming more resilient. After several difficult years in the fitness industry, he believes that well-trained fitness professionals and high-quality fitness education and equipment are more important than ever.

Before founding Merrithew

Lindsay discovered Pilates while attending The Juilliard School, working off-Broadway, attending auditions, and waiting tables. It was done by all of the dancers. Moira was also in New York City following her retirement from ballet due to an injury. She began her training with renowned Pilates instructor Romana Kryzanowska at the late Joseph H. Pilates' original studio.

In 1988, Moira and Lindsay returned to Toronto, Canada, to co-found the company that is now known as Merrithew®. He recalls, *"We began with a studio in the city's east end. At the time, there were few equipment manufacturers and fewer training centers for instructors. Buying equipment was so complicated that we decided to design and build our own."*

Each of the company's backgrounds in performance proved useful with a studio space and a start on solving the equipment challenge. They quickly began creating Pilates education and, later, Pilates videos. The duo created a powerful brand by combining insights from Lindsay's business degree. It has steadily grown to become a global community of fitness professionals and enthusiasts.

Moira and Lindsay will be celebrating 35 years in business in 2023. Merrithew and its partners have educated nearly 70,000 instructors in over 100 countries, and they also work with equipment distributors and resellers in over 30 countries.

Merrithew

Merrithew is passionate about using mindful movement to help people of all ages and fitness levels improve their quality of life. The team collaborates with physical therapists, engineers, sports medicine, and fitness professionals to constantly evolve and adapt its education and equipment for a wide range of populations and exercise needs, including elite athletes, rehab patients, and active aging customers.

Merrithew is dedicated to the development of effective and responsible exercise programming, which includes its distinctive, high-integrity fitness offerings, including STOTT PILATES®, ZEN-GA®, CORE™ Athletic Conditioning & Performance Training™, Total Barre®, Halo® Training, and Merrithew Fascial Movement. Each has been designated as The Professional's Choice by instructors and fitness studios around the world.

The company believes a digital-first approach to fitness is here to stay. As Lindsay states, *"We recently launched Merrithew Connect™, our virtual offering, so that we can continue bringing the benefits of mindful movement to our global community – virtually or otherwise."*

Sharing Experience Since Becoming Entrepreneur

Lindsay shares, *"If you had asked me 35 years ago whether I thought we'd be here today—I might have said yes, as I always thought we had the ability to build a world-class company, but I must confess I'm humbled by how far we have come and how many lives we have assisted in their wellness journeys."*

Merrithew has always responded to challenges with creative solutions, beginning with Moira and Lindsay. He shares, *"When we had trouble locating equipment, we built our own. Next, we developed education programming. Later, the decision to undergo detailed documentation of the exercises and training processes proved to be a defining factor in the business's success and the crystallization of our original brand, STOTT PILATES®."*

Merrithew has now invested even more resources in a digital-first approach to fitness. Its new Pilates and mind-body streaming platform, Merrithew Connect, is its virtual education and training support offering. With hundreds of workout and training videos from Merrithew presenters, it's designed to keep the brand's partners, instructors, and clients engaged, motivated, and inspired.

According to Lindsay, while the pandemic posed many challenges for the fitness industry, it also highlighted the significance of Merrithew's mission: to help people of all ages and stages of life lead healthier lives by providing access to high-quality fitness education programs.

The need for credible, knowledgeable, and encouraging fitness professionals has never been greater, both in person and online. Lindsay and his team are excited to continue serving fitness enthusiasts worldwide, helping them improve their health and fitness and, by extension, the quality of their lives.

The Collective View

According to Lindsay, education has always been the heartbeat of Merrithew. He states that creating career paths and sharing business know-how with individuals and business owners interested in teaching their clients the benefits of mindful movement is a cornerstone of our business model. The team believes that fostering an atmosphere of learning, innovation, growth, and excellence is central to the success of the fitness sector's global community. He asserts, *"The secret to Merrithew's success is the dedicated internal team we've built and our incredible and inspiring external community. Collectively, we share Merrithew's mission."*

Leading Role Responsibilities

As President and CEO, Lindsay drives the vision forward and provides the leadership necessary to ensure that the end product – equipment, education, or the production of their digital content meets the highest standards.

As Executive Director, Education, Moira oversees and works with the Merrithew team to ensure that those who train with it get the best, most up-to-date education in mindful movement and effective guidance in the career paths they've chosen.

A Message for Next Generation Leaders

Lindsay hopes the next generation of business leaders will: Remain focused on their core business and the clients' needs that are attached to it. In response to change and challenges, they develop novel solutions. Look for opportunities where new business segments may be popping up. And, of course, consider incorporating mindful movement into their lives.

Each of Merrithew's education programs includes mindful movement principles – moving with intention, focus, and awareness of the mind-body connection. This knowledge allows each team member, as well as instructors and their clients, to achieve greater levels of performance, combat stress, and become more resilient.

More Advancements in Fitness Offerings in the Future

Merrithew's Specialty Programs programs are expanding rapidly, both domestically and internationally. There is a high demand for rehabilitative conditioning practitioners, sport-specific trainers, active aging instructors, and instructors looking to help professional athletes and special populations.

With the current digital fitness trend, there is a greater demand for high-quality equipment and accessories that clients can use at home. Lindsay shares, *"We will continue to offer a wide range of premium products for personal and professional use, allowing clients to work out in the comfort of their own homes with all the pleasures and perks of an in-studio experience."* He further adds that fitness professionals and studio owners have shown remarkable resilience through several difficult years in the global economy. Together and united, Lindsay believes the fitness industry is emerging stronger and more successful than ever.

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