



# Revolutionizing Green Technology

BY DAVID VINSON, PHD

Founded in 1977, SportsArt has built a culture of forward-facing excellence with its remarkably innovative and green-friendly equipment designed for the fitness, medical, performance, and residential communities. The products at SportsArt are versatile, durable, and energy efficient as well as cost effective, and the company has proven adept at anticipating and responding to evolving consumer needs.



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During my conversation with Ruben Mejia—Executive Vice President, Americas at SportsArt—I learned that at its inception more than forty years ago, SportsArt was a relatively modest operation focusing primarily on designing treadmill motors for other manufacturers. The company soon realized that it could provide a superior and more durable treadmill of its own. From there, SportsArt has grown exponentially, vastly expanding its product line, and reaching new customers largely by word of mouth. Today, SportsArt stands among the largest single-brand manufacturers in the world with products sold to more than seventy countries worldwide. Such a meteoric rise is no stroke of luck, and the global reputation of SportsArt remains a testament to its standards of excellence, innovation, and brand inclusivity.

Mejia’s enthusiasm is infectious, particularly when he discusses SportsArt’s commitment to providing unparalleled service to fitness communities in higher

education. The company offers more than 150 exercise-equipment products, and these have collectively reshaped and elevated current industry standards. The impact of SportsArt technology on college campuses is palpable.

“Our equipment is rigorously tested, and we’ve developed hundreds of patents worldwide for innovation technologies,” Mejia told me. “We offer fitness technology that others cannot. This sets us apart and appeals to prospective and current students interested in technology that allows them to burn calories while offsetting carbon footprint.”

Mejia’s insights into the appeal of green technology to students align with recent research about why a student may select one institution over another. Research shows that among the Gen-Z community, 75 percent state that sustainability is important to them when determining what they buy. Moreover, nearly 90 percent say they would be willing to spend 10 percent more for sustainable products. Such data is eye

opening, and higher education must take note. In 2023, and no doubt going forward, we are witnessing a significant cultural shift in which college-bound students are prioritizing ethical consumption over price. With its dynamic selection of long-lasting and eco-friendly fitness equipment, SportsArt is an ally of any institution whose aim is not merely to grow enrollment but to do so while making its campuses greener and healthier. SportsArt has tapped into what students want in fitness equipment—sustainable, high-end technology that’s both fun to use and provides a great workout. Its fitness equipment serves as a tangible reminder to students that their institution of choice shares their values.

**Building Trust with the Student Body**

Students are more tech savvy than ever, and the response of higher education has been to provide smarter, more efficient, and fluid learning experiences in the classroom, laboratory, library, and beyond. The same

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standards of meeting students' expectations must be applied to our campus recreation and wellness centers. The question of how SportsArt stays ahead of the curve and determines what students want in their fitness equipment can be answered in just three words—listen to them. Mejia explains that green exercise is very much on students' minds, so much so that students, unprompted, are initiating these conversations and striving to achieve actionable change. They are writing and submitting proposals to administrators and sustainability committees. They are even reaching out to industry leaders like SportsArt for advice: "It's not uncommon for students to contact us," Mejia says. "Sometimes all they need is pricing. At other times they need guidance on presentation building and strategies for persuading the decision makers at their institution. We help in any way we can, because we believe in what they're doing."

Pushing the boundaries of green technology is an exciting, commendable endeavor, but market research only goes so far. By working directly with students to determine their specific needs and wants, SportsArt has gone straight to the source—after all, who better to consult than the students who use the equipment? Working with students builds trust and teaches burgeoning professionals invaluable lessons about eliciting change. From the perspective of SportsArt, offering guidance represents an opportunity to create positive change within the community. This is community building in action, a form of reciprocity in which each party learns from the other. From the higher-education perspective, working with students and encouraging a dialogue with SportsArt is both an efficient and generative strategy for advancing student needs—a win-win. The culture of health and wellness on campus is enhanced by SportsArt's green technology; students take note and are satisfied that their ethical concerns are met, and our institutions benefit from yet another excellent recruitment tool.

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**Innovation, Green Technology, and Inclusivity**

Imagine the appeal to students knowing as they hop onto fitness equipment that it offsets carbon footprint and generates electricity as they exercise. This is what SportsArt technology offers. Consider their

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self-generating ellipticals and cycles which require absolutely no power to operate. SportsArt's latest eco-friendly innovation is the ECO-POWR™ line—a series of cardio fitness products with a built-in inverter that harnesses wattage from human exercise, converts the wattage to AC power and then in seconds

feeds useable energy back into the power grid. SportsArt's treadmill motors use thirty-two percent less electricity than standard treadmill motors, which alone can save a university thousands of dollars each year. Their treadmill options are wide ranging and cost effective. SportsArt's ECO-GLIDE™ auto-lubrication

system, for example, allows for easier and less frequent maintenance. Flowtec filtration keeps the motor compartment clean and free of debris and dust, and their MyFlex/MyFlex+ Deck cushioning system provides a more comfortable user experience. SportsArt treadmills also contain heart-rate sensors that provide telemetry-based heart-rate detection.

As an industry leader in green fitness, SportsArt's ECO-POWR™ technology has revolutionized how users think about cardio workouts. The built-in technology embraces the connection between our individual actions and their impact on the environment by turning workouts into clean, renewable energy. Just as the technology facilitates better workouts, it converts up to seventy-four percent of human energy into clean, renewable energy. It even motivates users with meaningful impact metrics such as watts generated, as much as 220 wH of electricity per workout hour. For students, such a metric is a visible reminder that they can enjoy a healthy workout while serving environmental needs. SportsArt technology also facilitates a workout that feels comfortable and natural. Its ellipticals, for example, provide a biomechanically focused movement path that, as Mejia explains, "is the closest to human stride available on the market." The ellipticals provide users with a low-impact and highly efficient workout, and the products' seamless adjustability allows them to customize their workout for a uniquely personalized experience.

Mejia is particularly proud of SportsArt's success in creating brand inclusivity. Indeed, this is a core philosophy of the company—to embrace inclusivity and accessibility with its technology. "We need to rethink the traditional gym," he says. "It doesn't take much to bring in others who want to exercise. Let's get everybody working out. Let's have a space for everyone." Many of SportsArt's products offer motorized ride assistance, and SportsArt trainers set facilities apart by offering distinctive moving paths and multiple workout options within the footprint of single machines. Users who require technology for rehabilitative purposes enjoy SportsArt's ICARE technology—intelligent control-providing movement that is neither always assistive nor always resistive. It is designed with an assist-as-needed approach in mind,

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not unlike what a therapist provides physically and intuitively while gait training a patient. Users in need of rehabilitation benefit greatly from ICARE, and the technology frees clinicians from hours of strenuous manual lifting while also improving the users' access to assistive technology.

## The Family at SportsArt

A revealing moment occurred during my conversation with Mejia. I asked him to identify new SportsArt products that he's most excited about. He smiled, noting SportsArt's recently released rower, which serves as an example of how the company is applying its technology to new modes of exercise. But then Mejia paused, pivoting to a different but not unrelated topic. "Let me tell you a quick story," he says. "Back in 2020 during the pandemic, the economy tanked. People everywhere were losing their jobs. Paul Kuo, the founder of SportsArt, got us all together. He stressed that no one in the company would be laid off, that everyone would keep their job." Mejia paused once more, and the tone of his voice shifted slightly. In retrospect, I see how moved he was by what he was about to say: "Our founder was determined to use this time to grow and be better. We'd find ways to improve our internal processes, to work collaboratively, to improve the company and come out stronger. We did exactly that, and part of what made this possible was we maintained contact with our customers. We followed up, did all we could to stay in touch, to ask how they were doing. We applied ourselves and did what was right for the customer. We sent information their way for maintaining the equipment they had, to make sure they kept their equipment in top shape and sanitized. We gave them the tools." Following the pandemic, not only did everyone at SportsArt still have their job, but the customers remembered that SportsArt was available when others were not. They valued the company's personal touch, its positivity and determined sense of responsibility to others.

"It's refreshing to work for a company that cares. It makes you want to give it your all. This is SportsArt's culture, and it extends to our product line. We're always striving to do better."

Internally, SportsArt takes care of its own. Externally, the company shows how much it cares for its customers all over the world. Its products are inclusive and user friendly, and SportsArt continues to innovate for the benefit of the consumer as well as the environment. Mejia is a wonderful ambassador for SportsArt, and I have little doubt as to why. The reason is simple but also telling. Mejia believes in the values of the company, the supreme quality of its products, and the service it provides. I must say, I'm now a believer, too.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Dr. David Vinson has a PhD in English with specializations in transatlantic literature and cultural studies. He is a committed scholar, teacher, and dad. If you ever meet David, avoid the subject of soccer. His fandom borders on the truly obnoxious.

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