



## Europe: Austria

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WHAT ARE SOME CHANGES YOU HAVE NOTICED IN YOUR CUSTOMERS THIS PAST YEAR? ARE YOU SEEING ANY NEW REQUESTS FROM CONSUMERS?

The market segment of LOHAS is growing in Austria in the past year. Spa customers really look on what they spend their money. The customers are more aware of the sustainability of spas. This reflects on the one side that they require products which are natural without any artificial additives. Austrian spas tend more and more to have their own product line with its own branding and a direct regional focus. On the other side, they care about the ecological footprint when visiting a spa: how is the energy produced (solar energy), waste prevention, consumption of water, etc.

The quality of service is very high in Austria; however, the guests expected even more to be a “unique customer” among all others. As a result the spas have to provide more professional and individual consultation. As a result spas invest more in the education of their staff to cover this particular need.

The saturation of smart phones in Austria reached a very high level. The way of “how to use a mobile phone” has completely changed. The phone is a 24-7 companion for all market segments even for the generation 50+. Services of spas have to be bookable at any time without the limits of opening hours.

Consumers appreciate and strongly make use of the possibility to make reservations online themselves and to buy products via the Internet. Online vouchers are popular as people buy them for Christmas and birthday presents. Certificates such as the PCI certification for a secure handling of credit card information are requested and will be an absolute must have for suppliers in the near future, due to the fast growing online business.

WHAT SECTORS DO YOU SEE ATTRACTING THE MOST INVESTMENT CAPITAL THESE DAYS? WHAT ABOUT WHEN IT COMES TO THE SPA AND WELLNESS ARENA?

The focus on investments is everything, which creates a unique guest experience. Spas provide the guests with high-end spa equipment to create a luxury ambiance that they never forget. The most important factor besides the environment to give a memorable experience is the spa staff. Education and training will be more and more important to run a profitable spa for happy and satisfied spa-goers.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE LOOKING LIKE FOR SPA AND WELLNESS IN YOUR COUNTRY?

Wellness in general is a relevant topic in Austria and more and more understood as health protection. The government financially supports health protection and with this encourages wellness tourism in Austria. Besides thermal baths, that have been an integral part of the recreational activities in Austria



for years, there are an increasing number of day spas entering the market. Most resorts and hotels offer a specific themed spa and special signature treatment referring to their immediate environment. Beauty treatments are coming, but traditional treatments such as massages are still in strong demand.

In some regions such as Styria, there is a very intense concentration of wellness operations, mostly thermal baths. These businesses try to differentiate from each other by targeting different consumer groups (families, teenagers, pensioners, etc.) or offering extraordinary services such as exotic treatments. However we also see in these regions that only these businesses which are able to differentiate will survive.

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