



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

Economic volatility and political unrest: There is less certainty and more room for significant shifts in the economic and political powers as we know them.

The Environment: The uncertainty created by economic and political issues is heightened by increasing concerns about clean water, food and energy, which are directly tied to our environment and its sustainability.

Health care: The connection between human health and the environment is growing. People are more conscious of their health care, activity and food choices, including the desire for more nutritious, plant-based foods. There is also increasing pressure on healthcare systems due in part to the growing needs of the aging boomer generation.

Technology: Technology supplies us with a paradox, especially in terms of its social impact. Technology has been used both to build a sense of community and also to create a feeling of disconnection. If used well it can enhance our relationship with clients and the processes for our staff and operational flow.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?

Global shift towards collaboration and building community, especially focused on helping the environment and humanity. Examples include growth in community gardens, family wellness vacations, ecotourism and local community activism. Sustainability and collaboration are now linked together to provide more affordable means of reducing one's environmental footprint, for example, community "solar gardens." The desire for in-person relating, for example, co-working spaces for entrepreneurs and tele-workers. Face-to-face conversation time is critical to balance out facebook-style communication.

What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?

Publishing research on the benefits of modalities like massage, meditation and yoga, and providing data to help consumers make informed decisions about their health. (www.SpaEvidence.com)

Shift to a holistic, lifestyle-based approach. This expands spa and wellness services. New programs outside of traditional healthcare include hand and wrist massages for PDA use strain, executive medical services, and specialized services for teens, pre-teens and seniors.

The use of technology, operational systems and human touch points to allow practitioners to integrate, so that clients receive a more cohesive and collaborative experience. Technology allows for pre- and post-treatment intake and follow-up to enhance the guest support and growth.

A shift to an indigenous and local community approach, where spa and wellness facilities can tap into the strengths of their location, geography or people that make their area unique.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?

Greatest opportunities:

- Sharing best practices. What is relevant in one part of the world is more than likely to be relevant in another, and we now have the ability to share knowledge and ideas.
- Educate clients and industry on healthy choices. Example: spas raising awareness about new paraben and SLS free

products are available for mass consumption. This trend can continue to expand in new directions.

- The age-range of spa and wellness users is broadening, so there is a greater opportunity to enhance the offerings to the pre-teen, teen and senior demographics.
- The growing area of wellness tourism and especially medical tourism. People are seeking new options in quality and cost of medical care, and are looking globally for better quality service, better prices and more exotic places to visit.
- Global spa and wellness resorts partnering with well-known and successful consumer icons and brands, assisting the public into accepting wellness as a mainstream concept. Expand this trend through the introduction of new transformational health and wellness professionals, equipment and consumer retail products and supplies.
- Pampering has shifted to become a natural part of customer service. Health and wellness celebrities are becoming household names and with this greater visibility, the global spa and wellness industry can continue to close the gap between spa and allopathic medicine.
- Resort and day spas globally are becoming destination health and wellness facilities. The future of design and programming is already trending to provide many integrated health and wellness approaches, including integrating local market features and specialties.

Greatest challenges:

- Navigating the increasing amount of data, research and opinions about the spa and wellness industry so we are offering educated, proven, healthy programs and services.
- Client demographics are changing and so is the amount of discretionary income to be spent on personal care services.
- Government healthcare regulation increases may put pressure on the industry.
- Technology is the cultural base for generations X, Y and Z. Social media and technology are two areas where adjustments have had to be made in terms of retail. We are just brushing the surface for Generation Z, also known as Generation M for multitasking. This is a different breed and will present unique challenges as employee's and consumers.
- Standardization of education across the global marketplace is needed to create a strong pool of capable therapists with standardized skill levels. Common vocational educational programs are needed with interchangeable modules and interactive online learning models. We recommend professionally guided monitoring for hands-on practical development and interactive sessions covering customer service and safety protocols.

What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?

Creativity and innovation grow with trust, a clear plan and a focus on idea-generation. All stakeholders must have a desire to implement a culture of innovation. Consensus is needed about what these values mean to the company and how they apply in practical terms towards the corporate goals.

Several key elements:

- Commit: This is an ongoing and evolving undertaking. It's not a matter of adopting a new mentality.
- Prioritize: Collectively, constructively and critically evaluate all key areas of the business to define an ongoing list of short- and long-term objectives.
- Know your consumer: What are their demographics, relevant behaviors and key motivations (psychographics)?
- Get out into the world: Innovate by changing perspectives or having knowledge of your competition.
- Look at the big picture: Examine other industries, brands and business models to find inspiration.
- Be bold: While it's always prudent to mitigate risk, don't be afraid to fail.

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