



THE AMERICAS: UNITED STATES

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

World hunger, water-contamination and supply issues, and the future healthcare cost of obesity. The latter is already significantly impacting the US: a new Cornell University study published in the January 2012 issue of the *Journal of Health Economics* reports that obesity accounts for 21 percent of US healthcare costs (\$190 billion per year), double the previous estimate. This can only get worse in developed countries. According to lead author John Cawley, Cornell professor of policy analysis, obesity raises the risk of cancer, stroke, heart attack and diabetes, and the cost of treating almost any medical condition. The good news is that there is even more of an economic rationale for governments to encourage obesity prevention.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world that are game-changing and/or disruptive?

The globalization of healthcare and wellness services, resulting in strong price-based competition that weeds out the weak.

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

A lower cost business model will extend the product life cycle of spas in the United States and expand distribution. Higher priced competition will need to better differentiate themselves and better demonstrate their “value proposition.”

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

The essence of our being human is our ability to feel and experience the fullness of life in the face of an increasingly depersonalized world. Spa and wellness businesses that can nurture and grow this capability will be in demand and will thrive.

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

Make creativity and innovation an organizational core value that is incentivized and rewarded by management. Provide the tools and opportunities to employees so they can contribute and succeed.

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