

NORTH AMERICA: UNITED STATES

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

The consumerization of wellness/wellbeing due to the health crisis in the US is pushing people to look for alternatives at a rate never seen before. Proactive rather than reactive health management is not just a term used for integrative or functional medicine any more. From thermographics that confirm inflammation in the body to phone apps that track pretty much everything to sleep pods at spas, the new gamut of options is becoming more and more available to mainstream America where as a whole, consumers are reaching out to take charge of their own health. Clearly, with the myriad of information that is available on the internet, Americans are embracing wellness from more than one perspective.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: Coming back stronger and with more passion to provide patrons with health and wellness solutions to their guests

Wellness Tourism: Due to the high cost of care, not only the wealthy are seeking destinations outside of the US to manage and resolve their health issues and wellness needs.

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: The surge in building sustainable, healthy homes and work places where individuals can live in clean, safe environments because builders see the financial benefit of creating this type of product.

Beauty: The external way to internal health where now, beauty stores are adding programs like yoga and farmer's markets to their offerings.

Fitness: Variety in exercise equals balance and fun opening the doors to sports, activities and even meditation that before now, flew under the radar.

Nutrition: The Food and Drug Administration has required that trans fats be removed from human foods over the next three years recognizing that it is not fit for consumption.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

In the US, while there have been great strides toward a healthier workplace, we are still not where a first world nation and global leader should be. Productivity is at an all time high with fewer people executing the same number of jobs where stress, lack of sleep and poor nutrition is the result of having no time to recover. The standard two-week vacation continues to be the norm leaving the US at the bottom of the list when compared to what other countries require businesses to provide. On top of that, studies show that even while on vacation, most people check their emails or make/receive calls for work. Until we fully realize the importance of having clear-thinking, healthy workers, we cannot say that workplace wellness is our first and foremost priority.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

Coming from the hotel sector, I have seen a shift in what hoteliers are willing to investment in wellness. There has been a significant positive change toward opening their traditional business model to something more than rooms. Understanding that this is still their primary business, it is important to provide wellness solutions that are low risk/cost and high reward.

Example: On a current project, I recommended that my client qualify their Health and Fitness Manager (who already had a degree in nutrition and not using it on property) in Wellness Coaching. They did so and as a result, her new role will be the constant source of recurrent wellness coaching to staff, members and guests, as well as be a beacon for good habits in nutrition, sleep, fitness and happiness. While the investment may not seem significant with respects to the actual cost of qualifying her, the statement that it makes toward the property's wellness mission, is a healthy one.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

The responsibility falls on those who have the knowledge, means or voice to be able to make change; so basically, everybody. Even in the smallest way, we all can make change.

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