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ERICA DHAWAN WILL BE A SPEAKER AT THE ISPA CONFERENCE THIS MAY, and one of her

best-known books is called *Get Big Things Done*.

I don't want to steal her thunder when she speaks to us in Las Vegas—or when she responds in the Q-and-A on page 10—but I am excited about her work around the idea of collective brilliance and harnessing the power of our networks and our relationships to get the big things done.

To solve problems. I know that word "collective" can scare us (or is it we) Americans. The trait of rugged individualism is bred into our DNA. But it seems to me we have learned we are better together than we are in our individual silos. What is the sound of one hand clapping?

As we roll into 2023, we should think about this idea of collective brilliance as we seek to answer the big questions we carry into this new year. The questions around labor. *How do we attract people, and how do we keep people?* (Town Hall panelists share insights on page 54.) The questions around who has access to wellness in our communities. *Is wellness only for those who can afford it or do we all benefit when more of us can be emotionally, spiritually and physically well?* (Check out Mia Kyracos's story on page 26.) The questions around the future of the industry. *Are we prepared for the quickly evolving needs of a consumer who is looking for a deeper, more meaningful connection in their wellbeing journeys and not just a fancy headline or celebrity endorsement?*

What I loved about ISPA Conference 2022 and the few shows I attended in the year we just bid adieu was the number of new faces on the spa scene. Eager faces who will come to the table with fresh ideas, who will shake up and disrupt us because they will be asking different questions and coming from outside of our usual networks. All great harbingers for us to make some headway on tough issues.

So, Happy New Year! Let's hope 2023 is the year of silo breaking, vigorous reimagining and both hands clapping.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Patrick".
—PATRICK HUEY, CHAIR



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PULSE

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SPA PROFESSIONAL

EDITORIAL OFFICES

International SPA Association

2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite A325
Lexington, Kentucky 40504, USA

Phone: 1.859.425.5062

1.888.651.ISPA (4772)

Fax: 1.859.226.4445

experienceispa.com



EXECUTIVE

Lynne McNees

Crystal Ducker

EDITORIAL

Scot T. Gillies

DESIGN

Marja Walker

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Chris Guzicki

SALES

Kirsten Wright

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Pulse is the official publication of the International SPA Association, a member organization for the spa and wellness industry. Copyright 2023.

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Pulse accepts letters to the editor. Please include your name, title, company, address, phone and email address. Only your name, title, company and location will be published in the magazine. The editor reserves the right to edit for clarity and content. By submitting the letter, you are giving ISPA publishing rights.

Pulse (USPS 017-893, ISSN 15259226) is published 8 times a year—January, February/March, April, May/June, July, August/September, October and November/December by Associations International, 2365 Harrodsburg Road, Suite A325, Lexington, Ky., 40504. Periodicals postage paid at Lexington, Kentucky, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Pulse*, Attn: Member Services, 2365 Harrodsburg Rd., Suite. A325, Lexington, Kentucky, 40504, USA.

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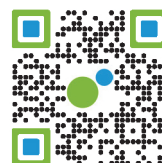


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ABOUT THE COVER



EVERY TEAM IS UNIQUE. From interviewing candidates and conducting background checks to onboarding new staff members and fostering employee engagement, spa leaders need to have their finger on the pulse of their company's team culture.

COVER PHOTO SHUTTERSTOCK

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2022 INNOVATE AWARD APPLICATION CLOSING SOON

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY for the 2022 ISPA Innovate Awards is Friday, January 6. If you've seen ISPA's social media channels since the application window opened December 5, you've undoubtedly noticed the colorful Innovate Award diamond flashing in readiness for a new slate of remarkable ISPA member innovations. Once the application window closes, submissions will be reviewed for eligibility and distributed to the ISPA membership for voting. The organizations



receiving the most votes in each category will be awarded a 2022 ISPA Innovate Award and recognized during the 2023 ISPA Conference.

Established to highlight the remarkable amount of creativity and adaptability displayed by ISPA member organizations, the ISPA Innovate Award categories focus on Business Practices, Technology, ISPA Member Partnerships and Philanthropy.

Visit experienceispa.com to apply before the January 6 deadline.

New for #ISPA2023: The ISPA Expo Awards

EACH YEAR, ISPA exhibitors invest a wealth of energy and resources into creating the perfect booth for their brands. The brand new "ISPA Expo Awards" will help celebrate their hard work and creative energy in a fun, new way. A collection of members including ISPA ambassadors and first-time attendees (excluding vendor members) will serve as judges, who will remain confidential until after the awards are announced. The judges will be asked to walk the full Expo floor during the first two days of Conference and submit their votes electronically by end of day on day two. Award categories will include Best Island Booth, Best Inline Booth, Best New Exhibitor and Superstar Team (honoring the booth with the best customer service). Winners will be announced live during the day three Power Session and receive visual recognition in the post-Conference issue of *Pulse* magazine with one lucky winner's booth being featured on the cover. Judges will select the favorite from among their votes for each category for the *Pulse* cover. ■



To secure early registration rates and explore exhibiting options for the 2023 ISPA Conference, visit attendispa.com.

Participate in the 2023 ISPA U.S. Spa Industry Study


CONTRIBUTORS TO LAST YEAR'S ISPA AUCTIONS WILL BE PLEASED to see the result of their donations and bids when the 2023 ISPA U.S. Spa Industry Study opens for participation on Tuesday, January 10. Fully funded by contributions to the ISPA Foundation from the spa community, the 24th annual Industry Study will once again be conducted in partnership with world-renowned research firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) to identify the Big Five spa industry statistics and determine the size of the spa industry in the United States in terms of number of establishments, revenues, number of visits, revenue achieved per visit and employment.

Additionally, the study will determine current and future industry trends and challenges, giving spa professionals a data-driven roadmap for how to move forward and make informed operational decisions. Armed with a profile of regional distribution, spa types, ownership structures and

service and product offerings in the U.S., spa owners and operators around the world will be able to gauge the current state of the industry they love, see how their business can improve and gather ideas to build on present successes.

All ISPA members will receive an invitation email containing a link to participate in the study on January 10. After devoting nearly half an hour to complete the survey, those who participate before February 1 will be entered in a drawing to win a free registration to the 2023 ISPA Conference. If you win the drawing but have already purchased your registration for the event, your payment will be fully refunded.

The survey will close February 17 and ISPA members can look forward to hearing the Big Five statistics along with a breakdown of the study's findings from the main stage at the 2023 ISPA Conference from May 9 to 11, in Las Vegas. ■



*All ISPA members
will receive an
invitation email
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to participate in
the study on
January 10.*

A CONVERSATION WITH

Erica DHAWAN

2023 ISPA CONFERENCE *Keynote Speaker*

Pulse: You are known for helping leaders inspire their teams to collaborate. When did you first recognize the power of innovation in workplace culture?

ERICA DHAWAN: Research has proven over and over that the romantic myth of the lone genius fails because it obscures the social, connected qualities of innovation. We can multiply our own knowledge, drive and insight “by the power” of others. Embracing this insight is a key aspect of getting big things done in life and work.

A case in point is the recent shift toward greater collaboration through peer-to-peer virtual communities. A few years ago, the CFO of a law firm noticed a decline in billing among their incoming associates. He discovered they had created a virtual Teams community to share information and advice about their cases. When someone had a problem or question, he or she would pose it on the forum and often immediately receive the answer from a peer. By collaborating with each other in this way, they were able to work better and far more quickly—across offices, practices and levels. For the first time ever, the firm’s leaders had to ask themselves, *How can we learn about how to innovate faster and better ways of collaborating from our youngest employees—where horizontal collaboration is natural to them outside of in-person interactions?* Today, they have created virtual peer-to-peer communities at all levels of the firm to

increase social connections.

To me, innovation starts by learning from others, collaborating in new ways and taking these lessons to maximize value and impact in organizations.

Pulse: In your best-selling book *Get Big Things Done*, you argue that passion and luck—and even expertise and intelligence—are not enough to achieve greatness. How can forging connections allow successful leaders to accomplish synergistic goals?

D: A lot of how we measure relationships in the digital world is about quantity. How many Twitter followers? How many Facebook likes? My book *Get Big Things Done* and research shifts the focus from *quantity* to *quality*. Building relationships that actually change people’s lives—that create value or meaning or both—is about making the smart connections, getting the right people together, collecting the important data and using resources in the smartest way. Simply building a network doesn’t lead to measurable change. The key is how you use that network, and connectional intelligence describes the skill that 21st century innovators have and that we all need to develop to maximize the potential of all our connections and put them to significant use.

The story of Jeannie Peeper reminds us that forging diverse connections allows us to achieve our big things and synergistic goals. Jeannie Peeper grew up with an extremely rare disease called FOP and spent years trying to diagnose



“TO ME, *innovation* STARTS
BY LEARNING FROM OTHERS,
COLLABORATING IN NEW WAYS...”



2023 ISPA CONFERENCE

the illness alone. With the rise of social media, she created a Facebook group to connect with hundreds of other patients and their families around the world. By nurturing this community, Jeannie created a virtual knowledge global network inviting doctors and medical researchers to learn from these rare disease patients how to better manage the illness. Because of the momentum, she mobilized this network to fund the first ever medical research university lab at the University of Pennsylvania to support doctors in understanding and treating the illness. Jeannie is changing lives because she forged connections.

By building a diverse network that supports and encourages this form of connective intelligence, any group will become more agile at problem solving and innovation.

Pulse: You popularized the concept of connective intelligence in *Get Big Things Done*. Is connective intelligence something anyone can achieve, or does it favor natural motivators and extroverts?

D: Certain people seem to have a natural talent for connecting information, people and ideas to come up with breakthrough ideas and solutions. Aptitude doesn't have to be limited to a special elite. Thanks to our modern world, and with them the widespread accessibility of information, people and resources, we can all develop this talent, or what I call "connective intelligence." In my research, I discovered people who excel at making strong, productive connections develop multiple attributes in common, what is called the "5-C's of connective intelligence":

- **CURIOSITY:** the ability to ask questions from different contexts to gain new perspectives
- **COMBINATION:** the ability to take different ideas, resources or products and combine them to create new ways of thinking
- **COMMUNITY:** the ability to bring people together to create, spark new ideas and develop care and understanding
- **COURAGE:** the ability to venture, persevere and withstand uncertainty, fear or even danger when connecting ideas or initiating difficult conversations
- **COMBUSTION:** the ability to mobilize and curate diverse networks in pursuit of a goal

Pulse: How does setting aspirational goals for "big things" benefit leaders who find themselves focusing on the details of their day-to-day responsibilities?

D: I think setting aspirational goals is a first step to achieving big things.

Ask yourself: What's the big thing I want to get done? What do powerful connections do for me? What do I wish my network could do? Where do I feel like I am not getting enough traction around my goals?

These are the initial building blocks for beginning to build your connective intelligence. Then, focus on the connections and people who can help you achieve your strategic goals. Within those meetings, you can uncover shared goals and values through strategic questioning. Finally, you can organize the information you know about your connections and use it to uncover hidden opportunities to bring different people and ideas together to create impact.

In my research, I found three types of connectors in our network we need to build to put our goals into action: the thinkers, the enablers and the connection executors.

- **THE THINKERS** are the people who connect with others and generate the groundbreaking ideas. Their greatest strength is curiosity.
- **THE ENABLERS** are the people who create the structures, forces and teams used to get big things done. They are more the behind-the-scenes connectors who build communities or rally grass-roots support around a common cause. Their greatest strength is community building.
- **THE CONNECTION EXECUTORS** are the people who mobilize all the people and resources needed to get into action. They thrive when they reach out and connect intelligently with people beyond their particular fields. Their greatest strength is mobilization.

It starts with goals but then quickly moves to mobilizing your network of thinkers, enablers and connection executors that really gets big things done!

Pulse: In your new book *Digital Body Language*, you address the adjustments required to communicate effectively in emails, on video calls and conference calls, and via IMs

and texts. How do the lessons of communicating from behind a screen carry over to the post-Covid hybrid world?

D: *We need to talk.*

What is your response to that phrase? How would you feel if your boss, or an important client, sent you that message?

The language is terse, which makes it seem serious. And when you're reading the message in an email or text, without the context of vocal inflection or an opportunity to read someone's expression, it's easy to fill in the blanks with a worst case scenario:

- "I'm about to be fired."
- Or..."I'm going to lose this account."
- Or..."Uh oh, I'm in big trouble."

Now, you may have never used this exact phrase, but have you ever sent a late-night meeting request for 8 the next morning, with only the barest explanation? Do you send emails or leave voicemails demanding an immediate call back, or a visit to your office, with only vague reasoning—or, worse, no reason at all?

All of these leave you wide open to being digitally misunderstood. We must remember even as we are back in the office, we have a digital body language and it can make or break how others feel in the modern marketplace.

Good leadership and communication are about more than bending people to your standards or norms. It also involves a willingness to engage across the different digital body language styles present in your workplace.

It is critical to establish policies to bridge the communication gaps at work and ensure you gather feedback from your team. Then, focus on norms that best serve the task at hand. Set norms for the appropriate time to use each channel of communication, message length, complexity and response time. Questions that should be answered include:

- "How long is too long for an IM?"
- "Do we want to put a limit on the number of people to include in a group video call?"
- "What should meeting agendas look like?"

- "When (if ever) is it appropriate to text someone?"
- "What is the expected response time for emails?"

It's also essential to have team champions who hold people accountable when practicing these norms and even have a polite correction method if they are not being met.

People with connectional intelligence understand which meetings should be calls, and when to look directly at the camera during a Zoom to signal attention. They know never to confuse brevity with clarity, that reading carefully is the new listening and writing clearly is the new empathy.

Pulse: What can we do immediately to improve our non-verbal cues when communicating in a video or conference call?

D: Here are my top tips to improve your digital body language in video meetings:

- **Make introductions, if necessary.** Virtual meetings, especially when tuning in from home, have the potential to feel more personal (and uncomfortable) than in-person meetings. Ensure everyone is identified, along with their position, at the start, and allow a few minutes for social chatter.
- **Keep things short and sweet.** Most of us are accustomed to face-to-face meetings and conference sessions that last over an hour. In that kind of three-dimensional environment, participants have a full range of stimuli, fewer outside distractions, and are generally more easily engaged for longer periods of time. Virtual events leave much more room for distractions and multitasking. A planned structure and a ticking clock can help. Productive virtual meetings have a predetermined time frame, limiting the number of ideas each member will bring.
- **Require that all participants be on camera.** As a rule, if someone else's camera is on, yours should be, too. The camera restores some of the body language cues that digital communication takes away, while allowing

"Ask yourself: What's the big thing I want to get done? What do powerful connections do for me? What do I wish my network could do? Where do I feel like I am not getting enough traction around my goals?"

team members to see with their own eyes that everyone in the room is fully engaged, and not scrolling Instagram.

- **Always appoint a moderator or MC.** Having a consistent face and voice that “stitches together” the virtual sessions for participants adds much-needed familiarity and helps to lessen feelings of isolation that may come with remote work. One good tip is to have the event moderator open up the conference or meeting, while taking charge of staying on the agenda and moderating questions for speakers as they pop up in the side-line chat.
- **Test your technology.** If you haven’t used Zoom or Skype in more than a few days, open your software before the scheduled time and test out both the video and microphone quality. This saves everybody time, while allowing you to skip the “CAN YOU HEAR ME?” section of the meeting.
- **Leverage silence.** Insist that everyone use the Mute button to prevent audio feedback and keep breathing, writing and fidgeting noises to a bare minimum.

- **Know when the conversation should switch to a different medium.** Just like in-person meetings, ask yourself the purpose and proposed outcome and eliminate digital meetings that lack a clear purpose or are missing a key factor for success.

Pulse: You have said we all leave a digital impression on one another. Is it possible to fix a poor first digital impression?

D: Like with any first impression, it is possible to improve but it takes intentional effort and asking good questions. Here are three ways to fix a poor first digital impression.

First, understand what drives the other person’s pet peeves. Does this person cringe at grammar mistakes? Does it irrationally annoy him when people send overly long emails? A lack of agendas for video calls?

Second, ask them about their preferred digital communication style, based on the complexity and urgency of information. For example, do they prefer to receive long emails covering many topics or individual emails for individual topics? Do they prefer to be kept in the loop on



everything you're working on (e.g., with daily or weekly update emails), or are they more hands-off? What topics are best to discuss on a video call versus in an email? When is it acceptable to make a quick phone call to them?

Third, reimagine what it means to "arrive early" and "stay late" to show a great impression. You won't earn

bonus points for showing up early to the morning call on Zoom in a digital workplace. You'll just be in the waiting room instead of chatting with colleagues as you would in the office. Instead, send an email or Slack message to them outlining your plan of action and ask what you can do to help them.

"EVEN IF IT TAKES A FEW EXTRA MINUTES, SPEND THE TIME *communicating* WITH THE INTENTION OF BEING ULTRA-CLEAR"



Pulse: What advice do you share with business leaders looking to motivate their teams while ensuring staff alignment and accountability?

D: The first principle of digital body language is one of the most critical to ensuring staff alignment and accountability: Never confuse a brief message with a clear message. Receiving an email from your boss that simply reads “We should talk” could have multiple interpretations. One-word responses like “Fine,” “Sure” or “O.K.” can also cause uncertainty.

Sending multiple question marks (???) instead of asking your team an actual question doesn’t clarify the information to either party. The recipient could jump to negative conclusions while, in fact, a boss may just want to discuss a proposal they turned in last week.

If you’re a manager, here are three questions to ask yourself to create a culture of clarity instead of brevity with your teammates:

- **Am I clear enough about what I need?** Always take a moment to provide the necessary background required for the recipient.
- **Did I include the right people in the email?** Is it clear why this message is meaningful to this person or group of people? It’s easy to be so brief that others don’t understand why they need to respond.
- **Am I intentional about when and what I expect in response?** Make sure you are giving your team an appropriate and precise time when you expect an email back.

One of my favorite ways to avoid brevity creating confusion is to create clear acronyms for your team. For example, NNTR on emails means “No Need to Respond,” 4H in subject lines means I need this in four hours, and 2D means I need it in two days. Even if it takes

you a few extra minutes, spend the time communicating with the intention of being ultra-clear.

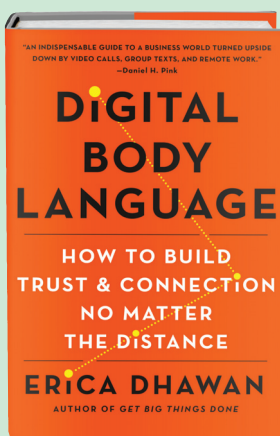
Pulse: How can connectional intelligence and innovation help with talent acquisition and retention in the current challenging employment atmosphere?

D: Connectional intelligence gives us the opportunity to acquire talent sitting anywhere in the world. It allows us to retain top performers no matter the distance.

Interesting examples are GitHub and StackOverflow. Both were originally designed as places to share coding, but after attracting so many users, they evolved into leading job platforms in which engaged users could be invited to apply for jobs by companies like Apple and Google. GitHub also has a rating system that allows the community to star work they think is useful, offering a peer-to-peer recommendation system of quality candidates.

Here are a few recommendations on how to use connectional intelligence to help with acquisition and retention:

- Build a “community engagement” plan to better connect with potential hires. Sites like Quora, GitHub and StackOverflow don’t just offer jobs to the next generation—they actually build relationships with them and create a community. Your company is better able to learn what skills they already possess and their needs and wants in a new job. How do you start? Designate current employees to answer questions on Quora, serving as “detectives” to find subject matter experts in areas critical to your business needs.
- Host a challenge for the next generation of talent to help you solve real business issues. Problem solving networks like InnoCentive do a great job of this. InnoCentive crowdsources innovation solutions from smart solvers all across the planet, creating an



Want to shift from quantity to quality in your accomplishments, inspire trust and bring clarity to your communications? Erica’s newest book, *Digital Body Language*, follows up on her revolutionary *Get Big Things Done* with even more connectional intelligence for leaders.

accelerated form of R&D made up of brilliant freelancers. Utilize these fresh, eager brains to solve challenges in ways you may have never thought possible before. Sometimes, by asking outside talent to solve specific problems, you may find someone who wouldn't have been hired during the traditional recruiting processes.

- Build an open learning network for potential hires to share and educate with you on your industry topic. "Communities like MOOC, EDx, KhanAcademy and Coursera are great, but they're not the only way to educate. Your company can create an open platform, just like TEDx, to share and allow content to be developed by anyone. This can be easily governed and moderated in a way that creates great benefits for retention and acquisition.

Pulse: You believe the greatest connections occur in unexpected ways. For you, Bollywood dancing and

music have served as a connector. How can we recognize our own unique opportunities for connection with others?

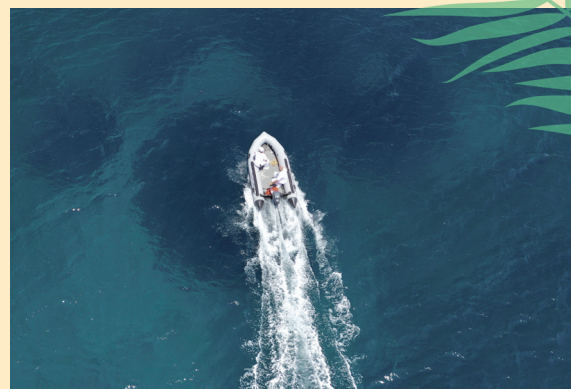
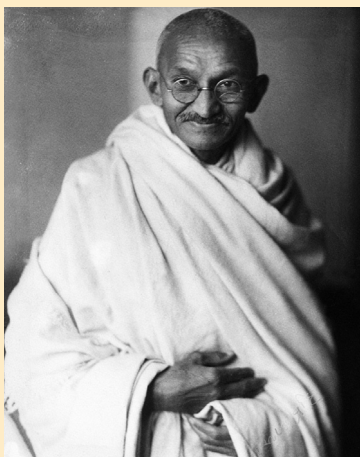
D: When I was growing up as a shy, introverted girl, Bollywood dancing was a passion of mine and allowed me to get comfortable being uncomfortable and forge unique connections with others. From then on, Bollywood dancing became part of my life and identity. Now as a keynote speaker, I've learned our unique differences make us stronger and I love sharing Bollywood dancing with others to spark connection in a new, fun way—and also move beyond our minds to our bodies!

Pulse: What should attendees know before they arrive at the 2023 ISPA Conference in May, where you will deliver a Power Session Keynote address?

D: Get ready to have a blast—connect in new ways—and be ready for some surprises like Bollywood dancing! ■

CONNECTIONAL *intelligence* ABOUT ERICA

- Favorite spa treatment? Deep tissue massage!
- Favorite ice-breaker? Dancing!
- Words or phrases you have forbidden from your own emails and texts? "Sorry"... "just"... "maybe."
- Best "day off" activities? Boat rides, lunch dates and—of course—spa treatments!
- Technology or gadget you consider essential now but never even considered prior to the Covid pandemic? Logitech BRIO webcam.
- Most inspiring leader or philosopher? Gandhi.
- Business failure that turned out to be an ultimate win? Failing at a tech startup.
- Biggest personal goal for 2023? Settling into my new home we just built in St. Petersburg, Florida!



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Investigating NEW HIRES

How to Conduct Fair and Effective Background Checks

BY JOANNE SAMMER

WITH 250 EMPLOYEES AND A FAIR AMOUNT OF TURNOVER, Colin MacCrimmon has a lot of jobs to fill and several ways to gather enough information to judge the suitability of a job candidate. When hiring new employees, the human resources manager for Oak Bay Beach Hotel in Victoria, British Columbia, relies primarily on reference checks from previous employers and managers, as well as personal references.



Using a set of standard questions, MacCrimmon probes job candidates and their references for red flags. "It's important not to be suggestive," he said. "Follow a template and give people time to talk." He has found vague answers to specific questions—like why they left a specific job—from either the job candidate or a reference can reveal potential issues in the candidate's job history that warrant more probing questions.

Recognizing that some past behavior, like theft, would be a dealbreaker, MacCrimmon relies on these discussions with candidates and references, as well as a broader professional network, to probe candidates' histories. "This is a small industry, for the most part, so you get to know a lot of people," he said. "Often, you know someone who either knows a candidate or knows someone who does."

To check or not to check?

Adriana Dinu, founder of The Cotton Spa Ltd in Toronto, takes a similar approach before hiring a new employee but also checks out candidates to see if they have a criminal record. "In the beauty industry, estheticians work personally with clients and collect sensitive information," she said. "Background screening is important because it protects our organization's property, assets, reputation, brand and, ultimately, our biggest asset, our clientele."

Dinu also finds certain types of information can reveal red flags that can be difficult to overlook, such as a poor em-

ployment history, deception or inconsistencies on the candidate's resume, a criminal history and negative information from references. Dinu's screening includes contacts with at least two former employers on the candidate's work habits, tasks performed and other questions, and a confirmation of education level and any additional training or certificates the candidate has earned.

Dinu may then follow up with another candidate interview to address any areas of concern. "By conducting more than one interview, I can observe a suitable impression of the individual and decide whether the individual would or would not be an asset and merge effortlessly with the team," she said.

While it is up to spa management to decide how far to take background checks on job candidates, they must do so within the confines of the law. This is not always easy to do because the specific laws and regulations covering employment-related background investigations differ widely by specific locality, state and country. In addition, background checks also have been the subject of much litigation in various jurisdictions, creating a changing patchwork of legal issues that have an ongoing impact on how employers handle these matters.

Managing legal obligations

While it is not possible to cover every aspect of the legal concerns related to background checks, employers should be aware of some broad issues. In the

U.S., for example, the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires employers to certify they have followed the law's requirements and will use the resulting information only for employment purposes and that they obtain the applicant's consent to do so. One of the most heavily litigated parts of the law is the requirement that a potential employer disclose to the applicant, using a stand-alone disclosure, that it may conduct a background check.

Given the potential legal challenges employers face in this area, it is a good idea to consult with legal counsel to understand exactly what the organization can and cannot do when conducting and evaluating the results of background checks on job applicants. This precaution extends to developing a compliant approach for this part of the hiring process and keeping it up to date. Spas may also need help in training hiring managers on how to adhere to applicable laws, how to create a bias-free but equal opportunity selection process, and how to feel more confident using the required decision-making process during various hiring scenarios.

Even when spa executives rely on a third-party vendor to conduct background checks, they still need to understand the process and their obligations under the FCRA and any other applicable laws. "In this industry, criminal background checks are generally the primary item employers will seek" when hiring new employees, said Susan Corcoran, a principal with law firm Jackson Lewis in White Plains,

"This is a small industry, so you get to know a lot of people. Often, you know someone who either knows a candidate or knows someone who does."

— COLIN MACCRIMMON

New York. "When they get the report from their background investigations vendor, they need to evaluate the nature of any criminal convictions and determine if they need to do any further assessments."

During this evaluation, Corcoran urged spa executives to discuss any findings with the job candidate directly. "Ask questions about the conviction," she said. "Is there anything about the circumstances (the spa) should know about?" This creates an opportunity for the applicant to discuss how long they were incarcerated, their efforts toward rehabilitation and what they have been doing with their lives since their release, including work and education history. For example, if the applicant has received a certificate of good conduct in a certain jurisdiction, "this is a factor that should be given heavy weight in evaluating the candidate, although employers do not often ask about it," she said.

Time is of the essence

In general, spa executives do not conduct a background check prior to extending a job offer. Instead, offers are contingent on an acceptable background check. The U.S., for example, does not maintain a national database of criminal convictions. Therefore, spas will have to hire a vendor to check each location where the job candidate has lived over the past seven to 10 years. "It can be very time consuming," said Rebecca Mazin, human resources consultant with Recruit Right in New York.

While waiting for the results of the background check, spas can use other screening tools, like confirming all information provided on the job application, to ensure the job candidate is representing their background truthfully. Above all, spa executives should be sure to keep notes of every interaction with the job applicant. "Have this dialogue and document the process," said Corcoran. "You have to show that you

are making the decision based on facts and information and the nature of the job, as well as business necessity."

This documentation is particularly important if the background check reveals any red flags or areas of concern. "It is important to decide if something that comes up during a background check, such as a conviction for drug possession, relates to the job involved," said Mazin. It is also important to give the job candidate the opportunity to rebut any negative information revealed during the background check.

Mitigating circumstances could reduce the impact of a criminal conviction, such as the candidate's age when they committed the offense, how long ago they committed it and proof that the candidate has maintained a good employment record for a suitable period since serving their sentence. For example, a spa might not disqualify "someone who once served time for auto theft committed when they were 19 years old," said Mazin.

"Spas, by nature, create close contact situations with clients," said Mazin. Compelling arguments against hiring someone based on past criminal behavior may be a result. At the same time, it is important to remember society's view of certain conduct changes over time. For example, some people convicted in the past under certain laws, such as some drug offenses, would not be convicted today because of changing laws and mores.

Whatever method spa executives choose when reviewing a job candidate's background, it is always important to do so responsibly for the sake of the candidate, the spa and its clients. "Your staff is a direct representation of the business," noted Dinu. "It is important to maintain company integrity and reputation." ■



JOANNE SAMMER is a business and financial writer based in New Jersey.

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personal and professional benefits.

If you're unsure which of your team members should accompany you to Las Vegas, you can still purchase registration tickets and wait until closer to the event to apply them to specific team members. In the meantime, here are some ideas on how to select the right team members to bring along:

- **INITIATE A SALES CONTEST** for your lead therapists, receptionists or retail attendants and reward the top sellers with a trip to #ISPA2023.
- Acknowledge your team's **MOST EXEMPLARY CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES** and bring them along to sharpen their natural skills among an attendee base that knows a thing or two about quality service.
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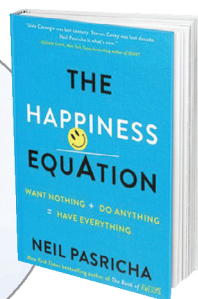
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Neil PASRICHA
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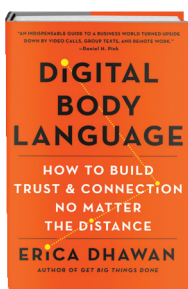


The Happiness Equation: Want Nothing + Do Anything = Have Everything BY NEIL PASRICHA

In *The Happiness Equation*, Neil Pasricha illustrates his "9 Secrets to Happiness," each of which takes a piece out of the core of common sense, turns it on its head and then provides practical guidelines for how to apply this new outlook to lead a fulfilling life.

The Book of Awesome BY NEIL PASRICHA

Based on the award-winning 10-million-plus-hit blog 1000awesomethings.com, *The Book of Awesome* is an international bestselling "high five for humanity" and a big celebration of life's little moments.



Digital Body Language: How to Build Trust and Connection, No Matter the Distance BY ERICA DHAWAN

In *Digital Body Language*, Erica Dhawan combines cutting edge research with engaging storytelling to decode the new signals and cues that have replaced traditional body language across genders, generations and culture.

Get Big Things Done: The Power of Connectional Intelligence

BY ERICA DHAWAN AND SAJ-NICOLE JONI

Get Big Things Done unlocks the secrets of how the world's movers and shakers use Connectional Intelligence to achieve their personal and professional goals—no matter how ambitious.



Erica DHAWAN
Day Two
WEDNESDAY,
MAY 10



What Do You Want to Do Before You Die?: Moving, Unexpected, and Inspiring Answers to Life's Most Important Question BY BEN NEMTIN

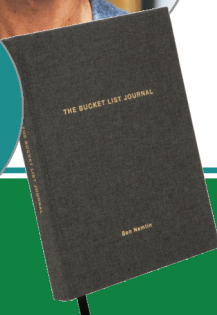
What Do You Want to Do Before You Die? is an illustrated collection of 200 of the most moving, imaginative, unexpected and inspiring things to do before you die.

The Bucket List Journal BY BEN NEMTIN

The Bucket List Journal is a tool to help you stay accountable to your goals through a simple formula. Track your list, take tangible steps toward your goals and ultimately achieve them.



Ben NEMTIN
Day Three
THURSDAY,
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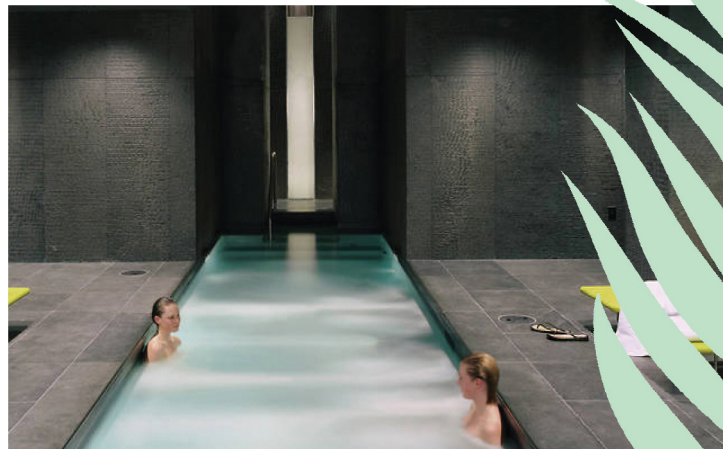
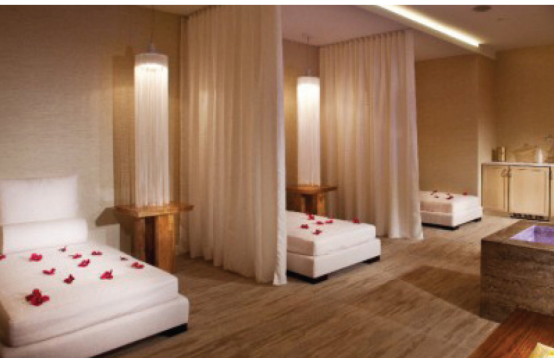
NOT A READER?

Check out these podcasts from our 2023 keynote speakers:

BEN NEMTIN: *Life Beyond the Buried Life*. **NEIL PASRICHA:** *3 Books with Neil Pasricha*. **ERICA DHAWAN:** *Master Your Digital Body Language*. Search for these shows in whatever podcast app you prefer.

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MANDALAY BAY AND THE DELANO will serve as the official host hotels for the 2023 ISPA Conference for the second year in a row. Both hotels feature highly respected spas—Spa Mandalay and the Bathhouse. ISPA will not be the only big group present from May 9 to 11, so book your room now and view the event agenda at [attendISPA.com](https://attend.ISPA.com) to strategize the best time for you to visit one of the two amazing spas on property.



#ISPA2023 *Awards* SPOTLIGHT

ON EACH DAY OF THE ISPA CONFERENCE, special awards are presented to exceptional individuals from inside and outside of the ISPA community. Additionally, the ISPA Innovate Awards are presented to companies from within the ISPA membership who submit their remarkable innovations by the January 6 deadline and are selected by the ISPA membership to be honored on the main stage at Conference. More details on the Innovate Award process can be found in this issue's ISPA News section.



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The ISPA Visionary Award is presented each year to someone in the spa industry who has made significant contributions to both the definition and positive movement of health and wellness over the lifetime of their career.



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The ISPA Alex Szekely Humanitarian Award is named in honor of the late spa pioneer Alex Szekely. It is designed to recognize an individual who acts as a respected contributor to overall well-being, encouraging the renewal of mind, body and spirit.

Calling All Spa and Wellness Leaders

Democratizing and Humanizing Wellness

We can make progress in 2023 toward a universal, aspirational goal

BY MIA KYRICOS

FOLLOWING LAST FALL'S ELECTION SEASON here in the United States, I have found myself increasingly reflective of the state of our country, our world and, yes, the business of wellness. I've had to push the limits of my own optimism these days while relying heavily on my meditation and breathing practices.

Gratefully, I spent the last several weeks before the holidays on the road, domestically and internationally, visiting clients, attending conferences and even saying hello to my alma mater (Go, Big Red!). I often wonder if leaders of wellness-driven businesses feel the same way, especially after what we've all been through these past several years.



While in Tel Aviv for the 2022 Global Wellness Summit, Mia Kyricos enjoyed a day trip with ISPA Foundation Chair Frank Pitsikalis (pictured right), and also attended meetings at the Cornell University SC Johnson College of Business and with the Cornell Dean's Advisory Board.

"...I say it's high time we broaden our impact, and gratefully, the tides seem to be shifting in our favor."



More consumers are taking note of products and services that cater to wellness and wellbeing.

A Moment of Honest Reflection

Over the past two decades, my work has largely focused on helping companies of all kinds to define, brand, operationalize and market wellness and wellbeing to industry and consumers alike. With the support of incredible teams, bosses and clients, I've had the good fortune to author wellness philosophies as well as branding and positioning materials designed to relay the benefits of wellness-related products and services to both colleagues and consumers.

Along the way, a handful of us have helped to establish industry-leading organizations that regularly report on the trillion-dollar wellness economy and track its now billion-dollar segments like spa tourism, wellness tourism and wellness lifestyle real estate. It's been highly rewarding work to help define and legitimize this business of wellness, gratefully inspired by early employers like Canyon

Ranch Health Resort and Exhale Spas years ago.

At the same time, when I honestly reflect upon whom this work has ultimately served, I realize it's a relatively narrow, deep pool of high-net-worth individuals. The reality is: I think we, as an industry, have done an excellent job making resourceful people even more resourceful when it comes to wellness, but we often remain out of reach, if not out of touch, with the people who need us most.

I say it's high time we broaden our impact, and gratefully, the tides seem to be shifting in our favor.

Today's Wellness Landscape

Our friends at the Global Wellness Institute seem to agree. Their latest research on "Defining Wellness Policy" cleverly makes the case that spending on wellness is highly correlated with longevity and happiness, ultimately setting an economic stage for public

policy. That is, if we shift our costly healthcare spend from reactive, medical care to proactive, preventive care, we stand to benefit more consumers and society at large. *DUH.*

This would be good news for spas and wellness centers of all kinds because so much of what they offer—from massage to fitness to complementary alternative medicine—is proven to reduce stress, inflammation and a host of other health-related risk factors, even though we are not always good at marketing these benefits.

Other recent developments that I think will help to make wellness more accessible to the average consumer include:

- 67 percent of U.S. consumers increased their self-care during the pandemic, and 79 percent of those people intend to prioritize self-care into the future¹
- Even before Covid's arrival on the international scene, the World Health Organization identified "burnout" as an occupational hazard, making it a more common discussion²
- The omnipresent discussion of the mental health crisis and a fury of investment and development of products are enabling consumers to take charge of their own self-care³
- The world's first reimbursable, digital sleep program is about to debut in Germany, thanks to Sleep-Score Labs, as a form of preventive care⁴, and doctors in Brussels are now able to prescribe art therapy via free visits to museums or galleries to patients experiencing symptoms of depression⁵

Even though some of these developments may seem far-reaching, they signify—at least to me—growing awareness and demand to democratize access to wellness for greater portions of the population. And our industry can help.



Calling All Spa and Wellness Leaders

As the industry looks to rebuild and better operate in this post-pandemic world, we stand to become integral to the fabric of our local communities by making wellness more approachable and accessible to everyday consumers. Here are some practical and creative ways property leaders can help:

- **Lead the way, locally.** How you are perceived in your community matters. Consider partnering with local officials to organize weekly walks, digital mindfulness breaks or other free events that position your business as a wellness resource beyond the menu of services you offer. In addition, establish referral protocols with other health practitioners and medical professionals who believe your offering can be positioned to their clients as part of a holistic recipe for health and self-care.
- **Reinvent common social practices**

like happy hours and coffee breaks. Along the same lines, where possible, turn your properties into venues where traditionally unhealthy social gatherings can be reinvented, and where your guests can reconnect to their neighbors. Better yet, reward them for bringing a friend.

- **Bundle mini treatments for new clients to trial.** Consider cost-effective ways to bundle 10-minute treatments and offer them on site or on the campuses of local businesses. Be sure to market the health benefits of your services (hint: wellnessevidence.com is a great resource) and perhaps offer incentives for repeat or first-time business.
- **Consider tapping into financial and spiritual wellbeing in some way.** Economist Thierry Malleret recently reminded me “it is impossible to feel physically and mentally well while in state of financial depriva-

tion.” And author Rina Raphael in her latest book, *The Gospel of Wellness*, cites the ongoing decline of organized religion as a reason why so many consumers, in their quest for meaning and fulfillment, have turned to the world of wellness. For some creative leaders, this is an invitation to consider how to positively impact financial and spiritual wellbeing, not just physical or mental wellbeing.

- **Watch the metaverse and other digital platforms for opportunities to extend your services.** A growing number of consumers are already comfortable taking a fitness class or a mindfulness break from the comfort of their own homes or offices. For destination wellness retreats and resorts in particular, the metaverse could provide opportunities to replicate their one-of-a-kind locations for those who may never get the chance to experience them in person.
- **Finally, when all else fails, take a walk in your customers’ shoes.** No innovation in the world will beat an authentic attempt to care for someone’s wellbeing. Imagine what could happen when we make our services available to segments of the population who have felt unseen by us or believe wellbeing services are unreachable to them.

It’s time we democratize access to the kind of preventative self-care we know to be effective and further humanize the way we connect with one another. ■

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MIA KYRICOS (pictured with her husband James) is the founder and Chief Love Officer (CEO) of Kyricos & Associates LLC, a consultancy dedicated to advancing the business of wellness worldwide (kyricos.com). Follow her work and ideas on LinkedIn and Twitter.



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Giving Voice to Employee Engagement

EMPLOYEES TELL US ONE OF THE BIGGEST FACTORS in their decision to continue in their role or leave for greener pastures is whether they believe their voice is being heard. Human resources experts take that a step further, saying retention rates are tied to overall employee engagement: If workers feel they are an integral part of their organization, they remain loyal. When they feel marginalized, they start to consider moving on.

Spa leaders are wise to build trust with their staff and to be purposeful about communicating with their team members individually and as a cohesive group. A great

way to ensure you're creating a team-friendly atmosphere is to focus on five tenets of employee engagement.

FEEDBACK

Workers need to know when they're doing well or falling short. Consistent and focused feedback from managers and spa leadership is the first rule of employee engagement.

Ginger McLean, director of spa operations at Hard Rock Hotel and Casino's Rock Spa & Salon in Atlantic City, says "setting new team members up for success from day one



"We acknowledge each of them. I know it's part of the longevity of staff—they feel appreciated and loved, and they continue to stay."

— TAMMY SCHNEIDER, owner of Zi Spa & Salon

is critical," so feedback begins immediately when new team members are onboarded. "With our team members, we do a 30-day daily touch-base, and also have 30-, 60- and 90-day evaluations." After the initial three months, employees are scheduled for quarterly touch-bases. "Every manager is available every day to every team member," Ginger says, "but these meetings look at career goals and aspirations, as well as individual performance."

"It sets team members up for success to know they're going to do a quarterly touch-base so they don't have to wait for the end of the year. For specialists, that quarterly touch-base includes feedback about their statistics, their flexibility based on business needs, goals and coaching."

Jaleesa Honrade agrees that "check-ins keep new employees on track." The director of spa and recreation at Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club in St. Petersburg, Florida, says regular meetings with new staff members "give them ideas of what they're doing well and what I want them to be working on." Jaleesa uses ongoing check-

ins "to make sure they feel valued and that their future is important to me—that's why I stay in an operational management role, because I like to develop my employees, see them expand their careers. I like to give them feedback and see them grow."

For Tammy Schneider, owner of Zi Spa & Salon in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, comment cards submitted by clients are an important trigger to communicate feedback to staff members. "Whether negative or positive—it's typically positive!—whenever I get these feedback cards on my desk, I call the employee in and chat about it."

Feedback meetings with staff members can provide an opportunity for ongoing training about spa vision and values. Nancy King, director of spa and retail for San Diego's Spa Ritual at Sycuan, says "Sycuan knows customers won't come if employees don't make them feel welcome. We do a lot of vetting and reinforcement to make sure employees know and understand the big picture."

RECOGNITION

Everyone wants their efforts to be noticed and appreciated. Sincere recognition from a manager—shared both publicly and privately—is the second rule to foster employee engagement.

Tammy Schneider doesn't immediately archive Zi Spa guests' notes of appreciation after her feedback meetings with individual team members. Instead, she celebrates employees in front of their colleagues during team meetings. "I typically address at least three of the feedback cards at each meeting and give Starbucks gift cards or a goody bag with fun products to show how proud I am of the specific employee or service addressed."

Tammy also applauds employees at a year-end party. "We award prizes to the team members who have had the



most repeat requests or who've sold the most product," Tammy says. "We acknowledge each of them. I know it's part of the longevity of staff—they feel appreciated and loved, and they continue to stay."

Prizes and group celebration are also part of Spa Ritual at Sycuan's approach to employee recognition. Nancy King describes the spa's "star cards" system. "Cards can be presented any time a team member does something exceptional. We read the comments aloud—we make a point of celebrating all the wins."

Nancy says team members may be nominated for quarterly award luncheons and an annual award dinner, "where they have a chance to win a trip as 'team member of the year' for their exceptional contributions to the Sycuan community." The spa also has a "Sparkle Wall" where department heads post shout-outs to team members from Yelp reviews and other client comments.

As a member of Vinoy Renaissance Resort's hotel-wide recognition committee, Jaleesa Honrade helps plan and execute several recognition events. "We distinguish people based on Vinoy's Diamond Awards recognition program," Jaleesa says, which includes a quarterly reception-style gathering and an end-of-year awards ceremony. Additionally, "notecards are posted in a shared area, and we share recognitions in daily huddles. We also host small

events like Be Kind Day, where we hand out Kind bars, and a program where employees can recognize each other with candygrams or charitable donations."

At Rock Spa & Salon, "rock 'n' roll" swag is a popular way to recognize employee contributions. Ginger McLean says recognition includes a weekly "star" highlight of a team member, a positive comment board where team names are mentioned and a "Rocker of the Quarter" luncheon. Additionally, "On-the-Spot recognition is huge. In addition to a gift card, team members receive recognition pins and other swag with mottos related to all sorts of contributions, like a 'bright ideas' pin, a 'safety' pin, and pins for work anniversaries and charitable activity."

Ginger shares an important thought about sensitivity and inclusion. "We certainly take into consideration some employees prefer not to be recognized in public—they may feel, *It's great to call me in to provide that feedback one-on-one, but I'm uncomfortable with that attention in public*—so we ask that question early."

VALIDATION

Managers provide validation to team members by valuing them intrinsically as human beings, aside from their workplace contributions. Hospitality professionals tend to be adept at interpersonal connections, giving spa industry



"We're always trying to create personal connections with our customers, it's important to do the same with each other."

—JALEESA HONRADE, director of spa and recreation at Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club

leaders a natural advantage in this third aspect of employee engagement.

"I make it a point to know what's going on in people's lives, recognize when they have something going on outside of work—a new certification, a new puppy," Jaleesa says. "I text them on their birthdays, check in on them. We're always trying to create personal connections with our customers, it's important to do the same with each other."

Tammy nurtures similar connections with her staff. "As an owner and a working manager, I'm right in the lines of everything. I want employees to feel valued and know their opinion does matter."

Nancy shares a memory about taking an opportunity to form personal connections after her spa emerged from Covid restrictions. "When we initially reopened, we were a fused team—some were new, some had returned from pre-closure, kind of the Brady Bunch," she recalls. "We posted a large blank page on a wall in a shared area and wrote 'What is your greatest joy?' at the top, calling for anonymous write-ins. It was so beautiful to see all we have in common. We had fun guessing who might have written that they like a specific sports team or other joys in their lives." Nancy shares an additional tip: "We make sure to recognize what treats or snacks individuals really like so we know how to celebrate for them in the future."

Ginger likes to make sure her staff feel seen and understood, so when they approach her with a personal issue, she sometimes tells them, "I'm not your boss right now,

I'm just another human being. Let's talk." She also encourages her leadership team to be understanding that team members are experiencing stresses that may be weighing them down. "I tell all managers they should have at least a two-minute interaction with every team member several times each month. It helps when we recognize what is going on in their personal life."

INTERNAL INFLUENCE

Employees' ability to affect their organization's policies and corporate culture—in other words, their influence on internal operations—is the fourth tenet of employee engagement.

Nancy has noticed an uptick since the pandemic in her spa staff members' desire to help shape behind-the-scenes happenings. "Employees request team meetings," she says, noting that would not have happened three or five years ago. "Sometimes they're just looking for an open conversation. Having that open dialog with the team is valuable. Then, when something comes up that is unexpected, there's a comfort level in communicating."

One recent example of employee influence occurred before the holiday season. "They helped shape the decision to close for Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays," says Nancy. "They wanted to be with their loved ones to celebrate. It was a huge morale boost. I know they felt appreciated as individuals who have a life outside the spa."

Jaleesa seeks staff input before making new policy

"Having that open dialogue with the team is valuable. Then, when something comes up that is unexpected, there's a comfort level in communicating."

— NANCY KING, director of spa and retail at Spa Ritual at Sycuan

decisions. "I try to involve them as much as possible in the things that will affect our day-to-day," she says. "They're the ones on the front lines, so if it's something that affects their jobs, I'm not afraid to take risks if they want to try something new—if it doesn't work, we pivot and try something else." Jaleesa also notes a side benefit of soliciting employees' ideas: "It helps me, too. I don't have to think so hard."

Ginger looks to her specialist staff to provide hands-on research. "When we look at bringing in a new product line, they're involved, they review product samples, they point out gaps in our menu of products and services. If they're not in support of anything we're rolling out, it makes it difficult for guests to enjoy." She is quick to note, however, "Voices are heard and recognized, but of course not every decision can be what every team member asked for. But we keep all ideas in discussion in case their time is right in the future."

At her spa, Tammy provides forms to her staff to seek their direct input. "We ask three questions: *How can we improve our culture?* and *What do you love about your job?* and *Anything else?*"

EXTERNAL INFLUENCE

Staff members are often the literal face of a spa—they are the ones who engage directly with clients. The fifth rule of employee engagement is to allow them to influence external relationships and brand development. At the spa, that means bringing team members into discussions about in-

teracting with clients and vendors.

"We are where we are because of the wonderful employees we have," Tammy believes. "Our staff of 45 all bring unique qualities to the table." At staff meetings, Tammy asks her team for suggestions about upcoming seasons and events, then uses their comments to help shape marketing and communications.

Ginger likes to recognize her staff's role in client relationships. "Amplifying the guest experience really comes from the team members," she says. Ginger also notes, "We have an entrepreneurial mindset to be creative within brand standards," and that her spa uses a "Culture Club" of team members who are invited to make decisions on different aspects of the organization's brand and culture.

Nancy points to her spa leadership's efforts to involve employees in retail product lines—and the sometimes unexpected results. "Our massage therapists asked for us to bring in a couple of specific high-end products and I was skeptical—prior product sales from that team didn't seem to justify it," she recalls. "But I believed in them and now we can't keep the product on the shelf. They were inspired to sell."

A yearly employee engagement survey that leads to an action planning progress is a key way for Jaleesa's employees to affect her spa's external relationships. "We use the Breakthrough Leadership process that has weekly WIGs—wildly important goals—to enhance the product and service we're providing. These weekly goals make our customers happier, and that makes our surveys better." ■

"Amplifying the guest experience really comes from the team members."

— GINGER MCLEAN, director of spa operations at Hard Rock Hotel and Casino - Rock Spa & Salon

FEATURED SOURCES



JALEESA HONRADE
Director of Spa and Recreation
VINOY RENAISSANCE RESORT
AND GOLF CLUB



NANCY KING
Director of Spa and Retail
SPA RITUAL AT SYQUAN



GINGER MCLEAN
Director of Spa Operations
HARD ROCK HOTEL AND CASINO
— ROCK SPA & SALON



TAMMY SCHNEIDER
Owner
ZI SPA & SALON



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chosen by more **Forbes Travel Guide**
4 and 5-Star properties than
any other brand.

“

I researched and saw multiple demos and most of the software systems are similar. What I was looking for was online booking capability and bilingual functions, as we cater mainly to both Japanese and English speaking clientele.”



Yoshimi Anderson
Spa Director, Hyatt Regency
Waikiki Beach



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- 50+ Interfaces
- 24/7 Live Support
- HIPAA
- GDPR & PCI Compliant
- 99.9% Uptime
- Live Product Training

*See how the spa and
wellness industry
manages success!*

NEW LAUNCHES FOR THE *New Year*

SPA-GOERS AND SPA PRACTITIONERS
SHARE A LOVE FOR THE NEW AND INNOVATIVE,
and facilities are always proud to offer the latest and greatest
personal wellness products. Several spas responded to a media
lead survey in *Pulse* last fall to identify their newest launches.



Watch for future surveys for more opportunities to share your favorite new products.

WHAT'S NEW
The Ritz-Carlton Orlando
Celebrates
 Biologique Recherche

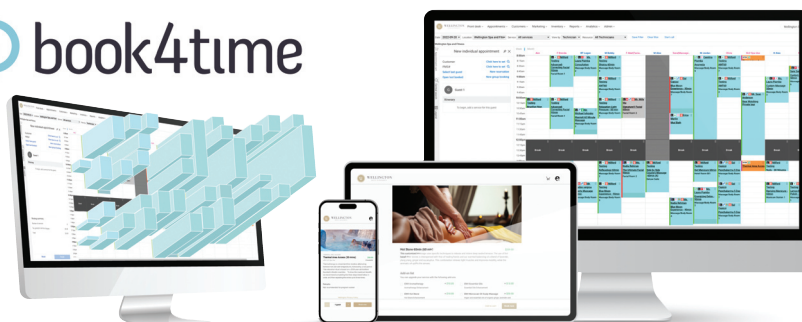
Director of Spa **Tony Angel** praised the brand partnership and ownership for maintaining the integrity of the line and process and noted their involvement played an important role in this brand selection. Tony expressed, "As we strive to elevate our service to a five-star level, we must also bring in the brands to help us get there."



WHAT'S NEW
Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club
Celebrates
 Book4Time

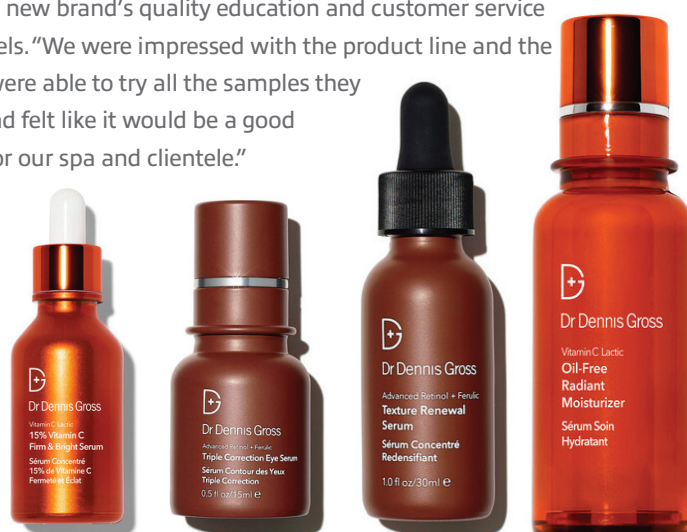
The ease of the yield management process within the Book4Time software is one of the features **Director of Spa and Recreation Jaleesa Honrade** is most excited about with this new launch. "By speaking with other like properties within the company, Book4Time has received many great praises for their ease of use and cloud-based abilities. We also needed a software that could integrate with many other softwares we use on property. Book4time met all those demands."

 **book4time**



WHAT'S NEW
The Spa at RiverStone Resort
Celebrates
 Dr. Dennis Gross Skincare

Spa Manager and Esthetician **Emily Mathis** has been quite impressed by the new brand's quality education and customer service levels. "We were impressed with the product line and the staff. We were able to try all the samples they gave us and felt like it would be a good addition for our spa and clientele."



WHAT'S NEW
Spa Ritual at Sycuan
Celebrates
 HydraFacial

Director of Spa and Retail **Nancy King** shared that HydraFacial is often requested by guests and was one of the reasons for bringing in the new brand. In addition, she shared the “technology fits the price tag. The value is there.”



WHAT'S NEW
The Cotton Spa LTD
Celebrates
 Swissline by Dermalab—
 Clinic Lemanic

Owner **Adriana Dinu** expressed these products are truly the ultimate experience of luxury, which played a role in the selection process. “This brand is the top-of-the-line launch within Swissline by Dermalab. With four luxurious products, Well-Aging is targeted at a higher level. Clinic Lemanic’s signature innovation targets the skin’s own cellular youth proteins, obtained from sap droplets of a tree native to a single island. This makes the products both unique and results-driven.”



WHAT'S NEW
**Mokara Spa Omni
 Hotels & Resorts**
Celebrates
 Eminence Organic Skin Care

Director of Spa **Erin Talley** noted the variety of offerings and ease of the partnership both played a role in launching Eminence Organic Skin Care within the spa. Talley had previously worked with Eminence at another spa and is excited to bring it into the Mokara Spa lineup.



WHAT'S NEW

Rejuvenation Spa

Celebrates

Essence One

Co-owner and President **Tina Morschauser** shared that the wonderful aroma is the feature she is most excited about with this new launch. "We received a free tin of Essence One at ISPA Conference in Las Vegas and loved it."



WHAT'S NEW

The Ritz-Carlton

Half Moon Bay

Celebrates

Circadia and HydraFacial

Combo

Director of Spa **Rakesh Thapliyal** is undergoing this dual partnership launch as a result of demand from spa guests wanting something unique as well as the opportunity to offer the latest technology, which shows better results when time is limited. Rakesh shared the "application of face serum and boosters as well as great skin peeling" are the features that excite them most.



WHAT'S NEW

Salamander DC Spa

Celebrates

ZENTS

Director of Spa and Wellness **Nicole Colavito** fell in love with the Ultimate Zen, which provides an aromatherapy infused, sensorial escape for the body and mind. "ZENTS is synonymous with wellness. The ingredients are thoughtfully produced, beautifully packaged, highly effective and therefore easy to sell."





Insights to recruit, engage and retain massage therapists

Throughout 2023, *Pulse* will feature interviews with experienced practitioners whose insights about spa specialties will help facility leaders to recruit, engage, and retain staff members.



STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION are perennial headaches for spa owners and directors. Spas have the typical hurdle of most service industries—work hours that fall outside of 9 to 5, Monday through Friday—as well as sometimes intense physical demands on practitioners. Anyone observing the industry for more than a few years knows an additional obstacle is tied to spa culture: the itinerant nature of spa specialists, who tend to move frequently not only locally between spas, but even across the country or around the world. Adding to the staffing challenge for employers are the unique requirements of the spa world's many specialist positions. Each role has its own training and certifications and position responsibilities. And career trajectories vary widely, meaning it could be a big benefit to understand how staffers in different positions may evolve professionally.

Recently, former ISPA Board member Kristine Huffman spoke with Karen Rutschmann, who shared wisdom about massage therapists gained from a lifetime in the field.

KRISTINE HUFFMAN for *Pulse*: Can you tell us a little bit about what kind of training is required to become a licensed massage therapist?

KAREN RUTSCHMANN: It depends on where you practice. Some training programs have a higher requirement of practice hours than others. Obviously, anatomy and physiology is a big part of it. Functional human movement is a big part of it. Pathology is important. The massage technique, hands-on work, is the bulk of it, how to touch the body safely, effectively, how to make a difference. And then in our program, there was a nice amount of self-care information. Most programs also now have business practices as part of their program.

Pulse: What was one of the most difficult things that you had to deal with or learn in training?

R: I'm very science minded. And I'm very practical. And the hardest thing was being open minded to some of these ideas that were foreign to me and weren't really backed up by mainstream science. I was rolling my eyes at the concept of healing energy and whatnot. And now 25 to 30 years later, we have studies that show that, oh yeah, it's real; it's basically quantum physics.

Pulse: I think a lot of people at that time, and maybe even today, think massage may be "woo-woo." It's interesting that you have that experience of being a scientist and not coming from kind of a more "woo-woo" perspective, and that this was difficult for you. Did many of your colleagues come from a different place, having a harder time with the science?

R: Absolutely. I would say most of them. I remember when I asked a question of my sports massage teacher. She just looked at me, stopped everything and just stared at me

without a word. And then she caught herself and said, "I'm so sorry. I got distracted by your aura. It was just so bright." I felt like some people were speaking a foreign language. I definitely felt like I was not one of the woo-woo people, and I was in the minority.

Pulse: Can you share other kinds of career paths you have seen with some of your colleagues?

R: I've seen several people launch from massage careers into life coaching. And then, a few others launch from massage into occupational therapy. And then a fair amount of people go from massage to be the massage manager and then they jump to managing in another area or managing a massage school.

Pulse: You've worked for a spa and in your own practice. What are some of the challenges you find in operating your own practice, and how does that contrast to working in a spa setting?

R: The organizational skills needed to have a private practice can sometimes be difficult for people. You need to call people back within a reasonable amount of time. You need to show up on time. When you're in the spa and you don't show up on time, you lose your job. A lot of times in private practice, people get very lazy. You can't be a space-cadet. You've got to be on your game all the time, you can't cut corners.

Marketing can be difficult. If I had to do marketing and advertising, that would be a hard thing for me. I've been blessed with a practice where word of mouth has just sustained me and I've virtually done no advertising, but I think if I had to do that, that would be hard. When you work for somebody else that's all done for you. All you do is show up. There's some real beauty in that.

Another thing that is different, too, is that when you're working for someone else and you have a client who's less than satisfied, you have a little bit of a buffer between you and the client. When you're working for yourself and you have somebody who is unhappy, it's you confronting them one-to-one. There's a little bit of safety in being an employee of someone else.

Pulse: The industry is really struggling to attract people into massage therapy as a profession and you shared with me that even in the community college setting your classes are under-enrolled. Why do you think that is and how do you think we could attract more people into the profession?

R: The shift to putting massage in community colleges was the start of the change. It has made massage training a little more mainstream. These days, what you're seeing is programs designed to give people what they need to become

"We have a big population of people who want to be served, but a small population of people who want to serve them, whether it's in restaurants, hotels or spas."

licensed and certified, and then go get a job. There's a little shift there that might have dialed down some of the people who might otherwise be interested, namely those woo-woo people you mentioned earlier.

One other thing is that we have a big population of people who want to be served, but a small population of people who want to serve them, whether it's in restaurants, hotels or spas. I feel like we've lost a lot of people who just want to take care of others.

Pulse: *Do you have a message you would like to give to the spa owners and managers about what might help them create a therapist-friendly culture and reinforce these are good careers?*

R: Don't set up a culture where people have to compete with each other in order to get bookings. You want a team that works together and has each other's backs. You'll have a more cooperative group of therapists if they're not competing with each other for money.

One thing I appreciated so much about Canyon Ranch is that they let me totally embrace my interest in neuromuscular therapy. Initially, I still had to do regular massage, but eventually they let me do just neuromuscular therapy. I performed the service I liked best, and I did it well. People would come back just to see me. When you have therapists who have special skills that your client base finds valuable, they come back.

In exchange, give those specialists the opportunity to work at hours that are less popular, because now you've got your rooms being filled with somebody who's going to book at any time of day, and you save your primetime hours for people who have a more general session and are not specifically coming to see a particular therapist. Take that handful of special therapists and let them work at the weird hours that tend not to book, and you have your rooms busy all the time.

It's also okay to offer a higher rate of pay for people working nights, weekends and holidays. If you're going to ask somebody to work on Christmas, pay more money. If you want people to work until 10 o'clock at night, pay more money for the evening hours. Give an incentive for work in a shift that nobody wants to work. If I was running a spa, I would give them a choice—you can work during the day, and you may not book as much and you're not going to make as much. Give people more choice.

And then it comes down to what's really sustainable in the world of massage. If people are actually busy 28 hours a week, that's not sustainable for very long. If you're doing straight hands-on work, you are going to hurt yourself. You're going to burn out. It's got to be a reasonable number of hours to work. Otherwise, it's going to be a revolving door.

Pulse: *Is there any other message you'd like to get out to the ISPA community?*

R: I think the other thing is for people in management to recognize the individuality of the staff members. Meet them where they are and try to lead them to where they need to be. Don't try to make everybody the same because that's just not right. Let them shine where they can shine. I think my experience was that encouraging people to do 15 or 20 different modalities to maximize their ability to book made for a situation where you had a lot of people who weren't good at anything.

When you allow a few people to say, "All I really want to do is shiatsu. I don't want to do body treatments. Or basic massage. I just want to do shiatsu."—initially they may not book as much and make as much money for the company. But when they master shiatsu, you're going to have people who come to your spa and return to your spa to see that person for shiatsu or cranial sacral therapy or whatever. Therapists really get good by finding a passion and developing it. So, allow people to find their passions. It would benefit both the therapist and the profit of the spa. ■

Karen Rutschmann

B.S., N.M.T, NSCA-CPT

Karen has a B.S. in exercise science from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She graduated from the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy in 1993, and received her certification in neuromuscular therapy from the NMT Center in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 1995. She became certified as a personal trainer in 2017 through the National Strength Conditioning Association (NSCA). With additional training in Tom Myers's Anatomy Trains as well as Orthopedic Massage and Russian Clinical Massage; Karen has many years of experience in a premiere resort setting as well as in private practice.

Karen is an instructor for the NMT Center and is an adjunct faculty professor at Berkshire Community College, where she teaches anatomy in the Allied Health Services department.

When not studying or working, she enjoys hiking, playing her trumpet with the Eagles Community Band of Pittsfield and volunteering with Lee Middle and High School's musical theater department.



KRISTINE HUFFMAN LICSW, formerly a partner with Hutchinson Consulting, is a semi-retired hospitality consultant and former ISPA Board member. She brings more than 30 years of experience in hospitality and human services, including providing leadership, psychotherapeutic services, staff training, program development and brand direction for the award-winning Canyon Ranch, Miraval and Travaasa Resorts.



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Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

BY PATTI BIRO



THE PANDEMIC AND OTHER CHALLENGES over the last few years have fundamentally changed the spa and wellness industry. Our future has never been brighter, but is not without its challenges. With this new status quo come significant opportunities to change not only the way we think about spa and wellness services, but also our guests, services, interactions and retail products.

Spa owners frequently share they are struggling to meet the increased demand for services. Recovery is still “bumpy,” but a fundamental shift in consumer attitudes regarding the importance of self-care and wellness clearly has occurred. A recent study by Ipsos reported a majority of Americans are more concerned about their health than before the pandemic.¹ Lifestyle, spa and wellness services have moved from the perception of a luxury experience to becoming a part of an individual’s healthy regimen for prevention and maximum wellbeing. In short, this trend can be summed up by a frequently seen quote on social media, wall art and more: “Self-care is not selfish.” In our new reality, the integration of mental health or mental fitness cannot be separated from spa or wellness services.

So how will you pivot and reboot your business to adapt, adjust and ultimately benefit from this trend? Let’s explore some of the major influences and challenges ahead.



Increased Demand, Decreased Personnel

The global wellness industry is forecast to reach \$7 trillion by 2025, according to the Global Wellness Institute.² Clearly the current labor force is not sufficient to meet this demand. The 2022 ISPA U.S. Spa Industry Study estimated 45,000 spa positions are currently open.³ While shortages of massage therapists are at critical levels, the labor shortage extends to all positions—including spa support and welcome desks. But some exciting innovations in technology can provide a viable workaround to these shortages. The acceptance of touchless techniques and technologies has grown and now is part of the landscape in many spas.

Ranging from salt cabins, red light chambers, cryotherapy and hyperbaric chambers to compression devices for lymphatic drainage and muscle recovery, float pods and more, “hands-off” therapies minimize the need for a specific spa therapist. Many options are self-directed wellbeing experiences. The mind-body connection is

not overlooked as technologies incorporating aromatherapy, light and sound therapy, visualization and meditation can be offered as a stand-alone or multifaceted treatment. Expect to see more spas, salons and wellness centers offering these therapies as an evidence-based option to what we have traditionally thought of as spa services. Touch is not “out,” but learning to pivot our perception of what constitutes a spa service has great potential for your bottom line.

Man, Oh Man!

During the pandemic, one target market grew at a rate more significant than expected: men. As shared in the 2021 Mindbody Wellness Index, men not only increased the amount of time spent on beauty and grooming during the pandemic, their annual spend on the categories of fitness, beauty and integrative health now exceeds that of women.⁴ No longer will men seek to enter a med spa through the back door or come only on “Men’s Night.” In fact, they are driving much of the growth in the spa and

wellness industry. They have the potential to become your most profitable guest base. Now is the time to re-evaluate your marketing strategy for men from top to bottom including your service menu, retail offerings and even easily overlooked areas such as intake and home care forms. Being more conscious regarding how you attract, serve and retain the male guest can have a significant impact on your business now and in the years to come.

Spa, Beauty and Wellness: It’s Personal

The growth in men’s services is just one driver in the trend to hyper-personalize the spa and wellness experience. From AI-assisted skin analysis and body mapping to personalized nutritional and fitness coaching, this trend gained traction during the pandemic when a lack of access to bricks-and-mortar services forced spas and retailers to design personalized DIY regimens and retail products. Today’s guests expect this highly specialized approach now that they can return to the physical space of the spa. Some spas and skin care studios are meeting this trend by moving away from pre-set body or facial menus by allowing guests to book a specific amount of time with a therapist who then customizes the treatment to their specific needs at that moment in time. Guests are asking for services to be built on their individual needs. Fulfilling these needs can be just one way to drive brand loyalty and guest retention.

Retail is No Longer an Afterthought

While doors were closed, retail sales kept many businesses afloat. Innovative spa owners and therapists devised everything from DIY facial kits to remote skin consultations to virtual special events promoting retail products. The importance of retail sales



“No longer will men seek to enter a med spa through the back door or come only on ‘Men’s Night.’ In fact, they are driving much of the growth in the spa and wellness industry.”

to the overall financial health of a spa or wellness business was driven home through the success of curbside pickup, delivery and online sales options. More importantly, consumers and spa guests maintained important relationships without missing out on their favorite products.

Today, retail product options for the spa and wellness industry have expanded beyond the usual “lotions and potions.” The category of wellbeing retail encompasses a wider range of products than ever before—each with a potential profit for you. Popular food categories include healthy beverages; consumables such as gummies;

healthy chocolates; water infusions; and treats. Growing in popularity are self-care items such as aromatherapy room mists, yoga mats, chroma-therapy glasses, smudging sticks and therapeutic jewelry. Three of the hottest segments—the *Three S’s*—are sex, sleep and supplements.

Products targeting the Three S’s have emerged in retail locations from a diverse set of brands, including high-end retailers, big box cosmetic stores and mass retailers. Sexual wellness products are now considered mainstream.⁵ This retail category has moved from a niche market to an expected category in any spa or well-

ness retail boutique. With no shortage of suppliers and product options, the challenge is to integrate this expanded product category into your retail mix and promote it as a complement to your service menu.

Final Thoughts

While no crystal ball can predict the future of the industry given factors such as inflation, labor shortages and trends in consumer preferences, it is more than likely the pent-up demand for spa and wellness services will continue to grow. The question is: How will you and your business manage that growth? ■



PATTI BIRO is an author, consultant, spa cheerleader and coach who has more than 20 years in the spa and wellness industry. She is a faculty member for the University of California-Irvine certificate program in spa management and a frequent spa industry trade show presenter. From day spas to resorts, hotels to medical spas, hospitals, non-profits and wellness centers have been the target of Patti’s endless energy and insight into creating memorable spa experiences. She is a frequent contributor to trade journals in the gift, spa and resort industry. Patti is the owner of Patti Biro and Associates—a boutique consulting firm located in Texas. pattibiro.com or info@pattibiro.com.

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Beeswax ~ Protects Barrier + Heals Skin
Shea Extract ~ Powerful Anti-inflammatory
Mango Seed Butter ~ Restorative + Hydrating
Cocoa Seed Butter ~ Antioxidant + Skin Barrier Support

BODY NECTAR KEY INGREDIENTS

Apricot Oil ~ Soothing + Anti-inflammatory
Squalane ~ Balances Oil Production + Improves Elasticity
Avocado Oil ~ Moisturizes + Heals Dry Skin
Jojoba Oil ~ Balances Natural Oil Levels
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Delving into Disruption:

Search and the Spa World

GOOGLE TRENDS—THE INTERNET DATA TOOL that tracks the popularity of search terms over time—is the ultimate chronicler of our zeitgeist. A great case in point is “zeitgeist.” That term, meaning the cultural touchstones of a particular era, or the things we care about in a specific time period, was a buzzword about a decade and a half ago. A Google Trends chart (below, left) shows searches for “zeitgeist” hovered near zero for years before becoming popular in mid-2007. By October 2008, the word was buzzing loudest, with more than a million people looking for answers to their zeitgeist-related questions. Since then, search volume for “zeitgeist” topics has tapered sharply, with only one brief rally in January 2011. Each month in 2022, “zeitgeist” appeared in Google queries only four to seven percent as frequently as the term’s high-water mark 14 years earlier.

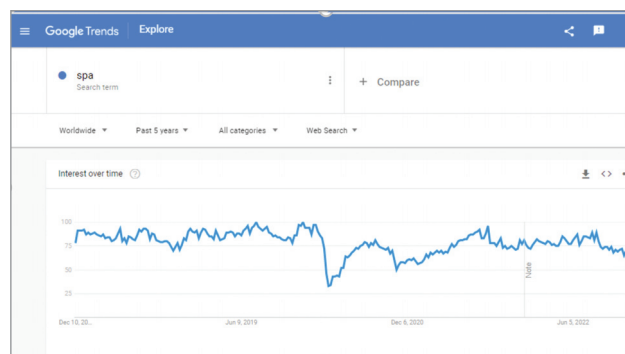
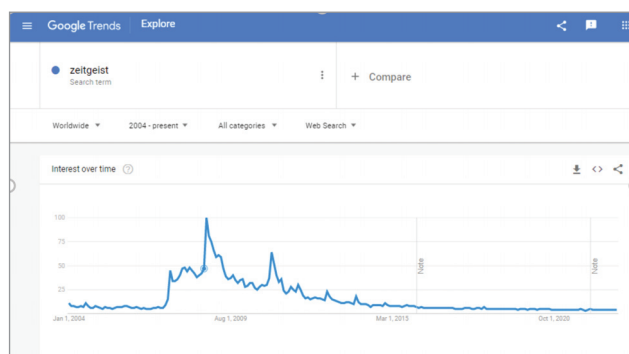
It is probably a disservice to Google Trends to introduce it with a trivial example of a somewhat obscure word. Marketers and researchers know the immense value of search records. A review of data from the Google tool reveals the evolution of our mutual preoccupations over the past two decades. The tool helps to identify shifts in what

we’re thinking about by tracking and comparing global search interest in all topics. If someone has posed a question or searched for information, Google has cataloged the query and combined it with billions of other searches to bring to light what is on our collective conscious.

Another example: Searches for “spa” have been remarkably consistent for two decades (below, right). They rise in late spring and early summer every year, but the wintertime drop is typically only a quarter lower than the springtime peak. With one notable exception: In late March 2020, Google recorded an unprecedented two-thirds plummet in “spa” searches. Search volume ticked upward again in later months but remained suppressed for nearly a year and a half. No one who was involved with spa services at the start of the global pandemic will question those numbers.

THE TREND OF DISRUPTION: *Everything is Changing*

Google Trends tells us “disruption” has been a consistently popular search term throughout the internet age. But more telling is the *type* of disruption people are looking to learn about.



Walking into a spa today, with its futuristic treatment technologies and advanced wellness products, is a different experience than it was in previous generations.

Twenty years ago, “disruptive innovation” and “disruptive technology” arose alongside disruptive new companies whose leaders espoused disruptive business ideologies. Transformational technology has been a regular and cyclical part of the post-industrial era, of course, with breakthroughs shaping each generation for the past quarter-millennium. But the rate of technological change in the past 20 or 30 years is extraordinary. Walking into a spa today, with its futuristic treatment technologies and advanced wellness products, is a different experience than it was in previous generations.

“Market disruption” was the outlier a few years later as the world economy adjusted to turbulence and disorder. Again, the spa industry adjusted to the new realities, making changes to stay relevant and solvent.

Google Trends tells us our current collective concern is *workplace disruption*. That term—along with several others like the Great Resignation, “quiet quitting,” the Re-

shuffle and the Big Quit—is part of the post-pandemic zeitgeist, with search volume mirroring the discussion nearly every company’s leadership has engaged in to combat talent shortages and disaffected workers.

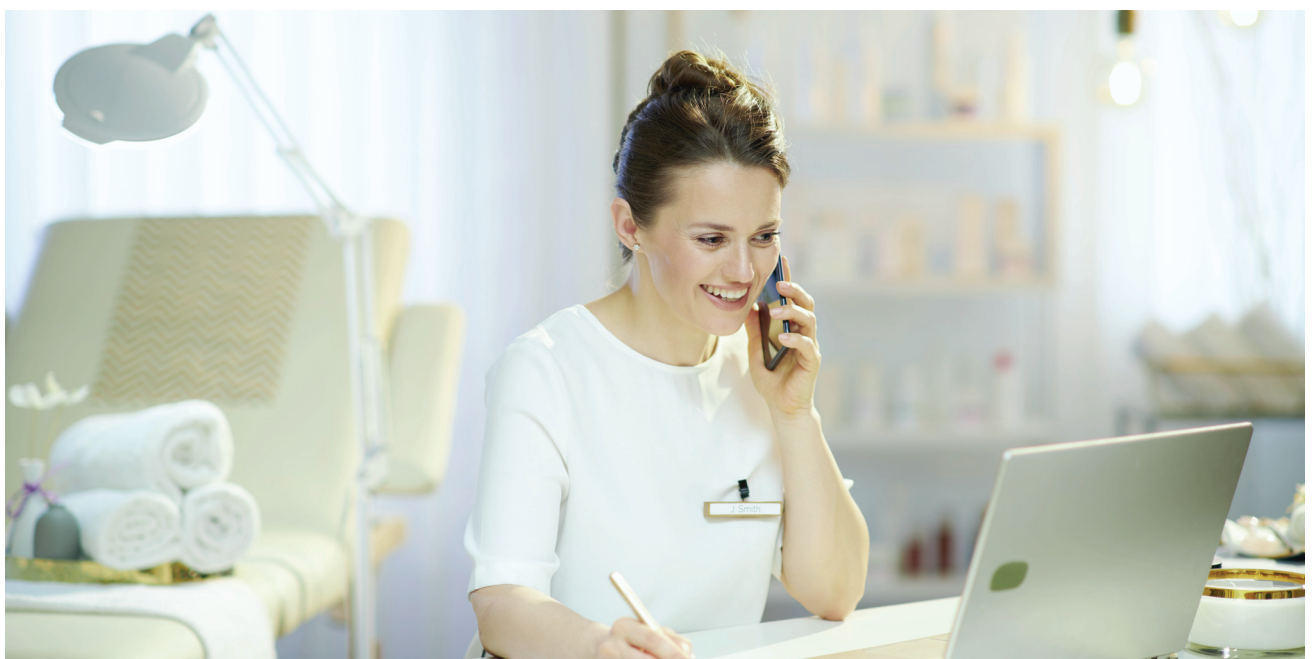
WORKPLACE DISRUPTION: *Employees have new expectations*

It is impossible to overlook the trend of workplace disruption in the spa industry.

ISPA’s Snapshot Survey¹ in the third quarter last year reported 69 percent of spas and 61 percent of resource partners hired new staff in Fall 2022.

Gallup’s State of the Global Workplace 2022 report² illustrates several important shifts in workers’ expectations for their jobsites, focusing on employee engagement. The report identifies these changes are recent: “Before the pandemic, engagement and wellbeing were rising globally for nearly a decade—but now, they’re stagnant.”

In late March 2020, Google recorded an unprecedented two-thirds plummet in “spa” searches. No one who was involved with spa services at the start of the global pandemic will question those numbers.



The global research analyst organization found only one in five workers worldwide felt engaged at work, and just one in three described themselves as “thriving in overall wellbeing.” Gallup reports “most” of the global workforce “would say they don’t find their work meaningful, don’t think their lives are going well or don’t feel hopeful about their future.”

Not surprisingly, then, Gallup finds “60 percent of people are emotionally detached at work and 19 percent are miserable.”

The study found five causes of staff burnout:

1. Unfair treatment at work
2. Unmanageable workload
3. Unclear communication from managers
4. Unsupportive leaders
5. Unreasonable time pressures

An overview of the Gallup report notes, “Those five causes have one thing in common: your boss. Get a bad one and you are almost guaranteed to hate your job. A bad boss will ignore you, disrespect you and never support you. Environments like that can make anyone miserable.”

Gallup’s report was not all negative. In fact, the pollster’s review of its data concluded, “The real fix is this simple: better leaders in the workplace. Managers need to be better listeners, coaches and collaborators. Great managers help colleagues learn and grow, recognize their colleagues for doing great work, and make them truly feel cared about. In environments like this, workers thrive.”

Anecdotally, spa professionals at two Town Hall gatherings in late 2022 told ISPA Chair Patrick Huey they have altered every aspect of their employee relations to adjust to workplace disruption. Hiring practices, shift schedules, employee incentives—all have been turned on their head as staff members reevaluate their career goals and seek readjustments to their work-life balance. (See *The Great Attraction, Part 2* on page 54 for a review of one of these discussions.) And in a recent ISPA member survey, several spa professionals shared their insights about the five tenets of successful employee engagement.

(See *Giving Voice to Employee Engagement* on page 30 for four spa leaders’ comments.)

POSITIVE DISRUPTION: It’s a “GREAT” time to be alive

Borrowing its name from the Great Resignation is the Great Reimagination. That is the name *Good Housekeeping* uses to describe a wellness trend that began prior to the pandemic but has surged since the Great Reopening in 2021 and 2022.

Last year, researchers for the magazine surveyed 2,600 people³ about changes they’ve made since the start of the pandemic, finding “health, wealth and family dynamics were at the top of the list.”

That may be great news for the spa industry, as a renewed focus on personal wellness introduces an expanded audience to spa services and products. *Good Housekeeping* notes, “From trying out meditation to cooking more at home and starting a new workout regimen, lots of us put renewed attention into our bodies and minds... People are making changes—lots of them.”

Good Housekeeping’s statistics correlate to Google Trends data showing personal wellbeing is another “disruption” of the past couple of years. Unlike other disruptions, this one has hopeful implications for the spa industry, with “self care” and “esthetics” and “mind-body wellness” trending higher as part of our post-pandemic zeitgeist. ■

AMONG THE REPORT’S FINDINGS:

- 84 percent of respondents “are currently taking stock of their lives and considering making changes to improve health, career, spirituality or relationships.”
- 44 percent “made a change in diet.”
- 40 percent “kicked off (and stuck with!) a new workout regimen.”

REFERENCES:

1. ISPA Snapshot Survey, October 2022: <https://viewer.joomag.com/sss-2022-oct-final/0784226001667573032>
2. Gallup State of the Global Workplace 2022: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/349484/state-of-the-global-workplace.aspx>
3. The Great Reimagination: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/a40849176/great-reimagination-survey-2022-results/>

SNAPSHOT SURVEY

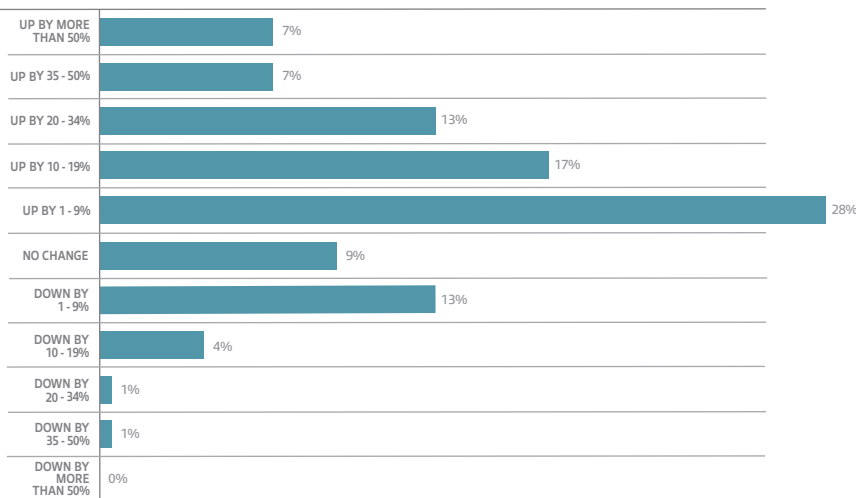
QUARTERLY REPORT

THE OCTOBER 2022 ISPA SNAPSHOT SURVEY asked respondents to share details about their spa or company's third quarter performance (July 1 through September 30, 2022) compared to the third quarter of 2021. The results reported in this quarterly performance survey further illustrate the spa industry's continued recovery from the pandemic.

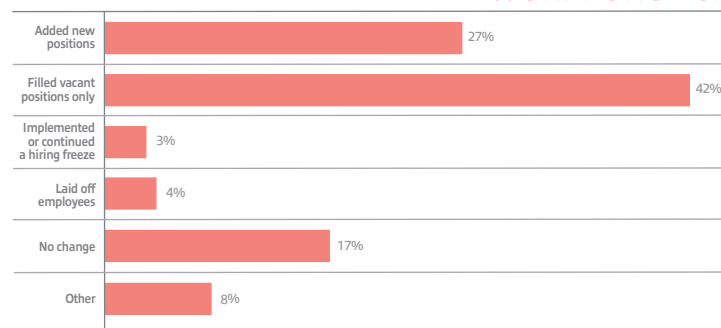
KEY TAKEAWAY

PROFIT CHANGE

COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD in 2021, nearly 80 percent of the spas surveyed reported an increase in third quarter revenue. Complementarily, 72 percent of spa respondents reported an increase in profits. Almost one-third (27 percent) saw profits increases exceeding 20 percent compared to the prior third quarter profits. Continuing the 2022 trends, spa visits were up for 62 percent of respondents.



WORKFORCE CHANGES



ALTHOUGH STAFFING CONTINUES to be a challenge, over two-thirds of spas (69 percent) noted they had either added new positions (27 percent) or filled vacant positions (42 percent). Additionally, nearly 60 percent added a new treatment during the third quarter while 45 percent added a new brand or products to their retail lineup. One fourth (24 percent) of spas reported an average retail revenue per treatment of more than \$25.

RESOURCE PARTNER ROUNDUP

CHANGE IN ACCOUNTS

RESOURCE PARTNER RESPONDENTS

(24 percent) reported their profits were up by 20 to 34 percent while 43 percent added new positions. Compared to the third quarter of 2021, 43 percent of resource partners had the number of new accounts increase by more than 15 percent.

	UP MORE THAN 15%	UP 1 - 15%	NO CHANGE	DOWN 1 - 15%	DOWN MORE THAN 15%
NUMBER OF NEW ACCOUNTS	43%	46%	7%	4%	0%
NUMBER OF REPEAT CLIENTS	17%	46%	33%	4%	0%
NUMBER OF ACCOUNT CLOSURES	0%	8%	76%	8%	8%
NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS	21%	38%	42%	0%	0%

THE SPA AT THE WOODSTOCK INN & RESORT

Bringing the Outside In

THE SPA AT WOODSTOCK INN AND RESORT

is one of the most luxurious spas in New England. Located in central Vermont's Woodstock Village, known as "the prettiest small town in America," this historic resort features luxury accommodations, farm-to-table dining and endless activities. The Vermont-inspired spa is LEED-certified and features a spa boutique, outdoor whirlpool, dry cedar sauna, eucalyptus steam rooms and locally sourced products.



SPA BY THE NUMBERS:

Total square feet in the spa: 10,000

The Spa at Woodstock's opening year: 2010

Approximate square footage of the retail space: 650

Total treatment rooms in the spa: 10

Bringing the Outside In

"The expansive open space and large windows set The Spa at the Woodstock Inn & Resort apart from other facilities," says Spa Director Khim Neang. "From the moment guests walk into the spa, they are invited into the natural beauty and light that Vermont has to offer. The space is completely centered around bringing the outside in. Using a soft white paint on the walls—to reflect the natural light through the large windows as it changes during the day—sets the mood in each space. The absence of 90 degree angles between the walls and ceilings helps give a soft, warm and fluid feeling even with no color in the design. These intentional design elements make for a truly wonderful guest experience."

The entrance to the spa invites guests into the lobby and retail area. As they are welcomed, guests can immediately lower their shoulders and breathe deeply due to the warmth of the space, the beauty of the design and the delightful eucalyptus aromatherapy. Guests also enjoy the coziness of the Shaker woodstoves burning in the lobby and Great Room during the colder seasons. In the spring and summer, the space is brightened with fresh flowers from the resort's organic Kelly Way Gardens.



"I love walking into the room...Our lobby and retail space are one, helping our guests feel invited to look through what products we carry."

A Locally Sourced Retail Experience

"Our retail space is simple, open and uncluttered," Neang reports with pride. "I love walking into the room because even during a busy day, I can allow myself to stay open. That is very important because we can't serve from a place of being closed and confined. This allows us to be natural with our guests and carry their spa experience through to the retail offerings. Our lobby and retail space are one, helping our guests feel invited to look through what products we carry."

To make the retail experience even more local, Neang touts the spa's sourcing, from the architecture to the treatment room. "We partner with our local vendors in both the interior design of the spa and the retail products we use in our treatments. In our retail space, we carry local brands including a Vermont skincare line, hand-poured candles and jewelry. In the spa's Great Room, we feature Simon Pearce, world-renowned Vermont-based glass-maker who created hand blown lights that suspend from the tall ceilings. We also partner with Farmhouse Pottery, based in Woodstock, Vermont. Their custom-built farmhouse table, crafted from New England Ash, is a perfect addition to our Great Room. Farmhouse Pottery's handmade clay bowls and vases are also utilized throughout the spa." ■



TOWN HALL RECAP

THE GREAT ATTRACTION, PART 2:

Adapting the Renaissance to the Real World

The graphic features the ISPA Town Hall logo at the top. Below it, the title "The Great Attraction Part II" is written in a large, elegant script. Five circular headshots of the panelists are arranged in a row. Below each headshot is the name and affiliation of the panelist. At the bottom, a sponsor presentation is listed for Jessica Wadley, with a small headshot and the Oakworks logo.

Panelists:

- Marci Howard-May**
Red Mountain Resort – Sagestone Spa
- Patrick Huey, ISPA Chair**
Moderator
- Megan Jasper**
Gadabout SalonSpas
- Charlotte Prescott**
Fisher Island Club
- Justin Vanderpoel**
Well & Being Spa at the Fairmont Princess

SPONSOR PRESENTATION BY: JESSICA WADLEY

JESSICA WADLEY represented Town Hall sponsor Oakworks Inc, designer of medical, spa and massage tables and accessories. Jessica shared valuable tips about capital expenditures, ADA compliance, and how budgeting considerations may affect attracting and hiring great employees.

IN A TOWN HALL MEETING recapped in the final issue of *Pulse* last year, four panelists discussed “The Great Attraction: Turning Resignation into Renaissance.” Their focus was making workplaces attractive to prospective and existing employees.

Recently, **ISPA Chairman Patrick Huey** asked a new panel of spa leaders to continue the conversation about applying exceptional hiring practices to attract and retain talent. **Charlotte Prescott** (Fisher Island Club), **Marci Howard-May** (Red Mountain Resort), **Megan Jasper** (Gadabout SalonSpas and VerVe Salons) and **Justin Vanderpoel** (Fairmont Scottsdale Princess) offered perspectives from their own spas about implementing the “renaissance” into a post-Covid world that has new demands and expectations.

CHANGING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

The four panelists reviewed the fraught issue of staffing and found common ground on two points.

First, in today’s demanding employment market, spas must move quickly through the process from application and interview to job offer. Charlotte Prescott of Miami’s Fisher Island Club noted, “We’ve abbreviated our interview process” since the pandemic to meet new job-seeker expectations, and Justin Vanderpoel of Arizona’s Fairmont Scottsdale Princess agreed. “We don’t want to drag it out—because we know people are going to take another offer if we don’t move quickly.”

“We’re trying to be super-fast and not have multiple layers of interviews,” added Megan Jasper of Tucson, Arizona’s Gadabout SalonSpas and VerVe Salons. “The inter-



view process is definitely not nearly as strict or stringent as it has been previously."

Marci Howard-May noted similar adjustments to the interview process at St. George, Utah's Red Mountain Resort. "We as well have shaved off several days, just moving it as quickly as possible because you have to jump on people before they've been snagged. If we like a candidate, we tell them at the end of the interview: *Look for a call or email from our HR person, we really want you to join the team.*"

The second area where Town Hall panel members coalesced was "Plan B" for when experienced talent is hard to find. While prior skill development was once a high priority for candidates, the panelists agreed the best action today is to hire for personality and aptitude, then train for skills.

"One of the things that we say in our interview process," said Megan, "is we're hiring for friendly, we're hiring for kindness, we're hiring for 'how are you going to be a part of our team,'" as well as "are you prepared for the skills we're going to teach you along the way?"

Charlotte finds the interview process to be less focused on existing skills. "We're looking at the whole package to see what we would need to supplement with training."

ADDING VALUE TO ORIENTATION AND ONBOARDING

Changes to the process of bringing in new talent do not stop with modifications to job interviews. Newly-hired staff in the post-Covid era have a different experience for their first days and weeks than in years past.

"When we've been short staffed and management supervisors are spread very thin, we've had to really employ the support of all of our team to assist with onboarding,"

Charlotte said. "So we do a checklist agenda for new hires—it's been a nice way for them to be integrated into the team to get exposure to different employees. And it's really a team effort to welcome somebody on board."

"We do a really big orientation with them, make sure they have binders filled with all the information," Justin said. "And then after that, we do something called the buddy system that we recently launched. We're kind of testing out how that goes—you get paired up, and that person is your 'go-to' to really help answer any questions that you need. We've had some great feedback on that. People get connected, and they get to feel like they're more part of the team in the break room. It's just a really good experience overall."

LEARNING FLEXIBILITY

"I think the key word that we all are thinking about and sharing and executing is flexibility—if Covid taught us nothing else, it was that flexibility was the key to business relationships." That was Megan's summary of another consensus among the panelists. She noted Gadabout Salon-Spas and VerVe Salons have strived to be more flexible about requests for time off, specifically.

Marci shared a similar evolution in the Red Mountain Resort's scheduling. "It's actually turning into this beautiful, really reciprocal partnership. There's less dictating of schedules, and more working together to meet our guests' needs."

Charlotte shared that, as Fisher Island Club shifted its approach to scheduling, "We have to hire more people to cover the shifts, because I don't think that request is going to go away at all. And I think if we stay too rigid, we're going to be the ones who lose." ■

FAVORITE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Every candidate has a pat response to "Where do you see yourself in five years?" and "What is your biggest weakness?" **Avoid those clichéd interview questions** and instead try to introduce discussions that will shed light on your candidates' motivations and personalities.

"How would your family describe you?" ■ CHARLOTTE PRESCOTT observes "it makes them pause and go, 'Let me think about that.' And what comes out is usually pretty telling about the personality to deliver a true snapshot."

"Tell me about the most recent amazing experience you've had." ■ MEGAN JASPER finds this question helps her "learn what candidates think excellent guest service is."

"What is the most important thing for our guests' experience?" ■ JUSTIN VANDERPOEL believes "that really helps me and my team gather more insight about how they'll fit into our culture and how they're going to take care of our guests."

"What is important to you in a workplace environment?" ■ MARCI HOWARD-MAY has discovered this question "lets us start a great dialogue about what our culture is and if we're a good fit for each other."

MEMBER NEWS

SHARE YOUR MEMBER NEWS

ispa@ispastaff.com



News and events mentioned here may have been modified since editorial content was finalized.

Openings

1. **Biologique Recherche** has made its U.S. debut in Los Angeles. A 5,000 square meter facility decorated with the brand's signature palette of blue, gold and white, Ambassade Los Angeles provides proprietary skin diagnostic services and personalized spa treatments for the face, body and scalp, as well as its full range of retail products.
2. **Four Seasons** is taking its award-winning service to the ocean with the launch of **Four Seasons Yachts**, "appealing to discerning guests looking to reimagine their love of travel by experiencing the splendor of modern sea voyaging," according to a statement. Anticipated to set sail in late 2025, the bespoke voyages will carve through the sea to some of the world's most breathtaking destinations. The vessel will be supported by a dedicated team, with staff outnumbering guests.
3. **Canyon Ranch** has announced exciting plans for expansions. This year, the integrative wellness company will break ground on Canyon Ranch Austin, a new wellness resort in Texas Hill Country, which will open to guests in 2025. Also launching soon is **Canyon Ranch Clubs**, an all-new experience designed to bring your wellness practice closer to home. The first location will open this year in Fort Worth, Texas, followed by a Houston location in 2024.
4. **Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group (MOHG)** has unveiled its new **Swiss destination Mandarin Oriental Palace**, Luzern, after an extensive renovation of one of the city's Belle Epoque-era landmarks. The overhaul project was overseen by local architects Iwan Bühler Architekten and London-based interior designers Jestico + Whiles. Their joint vision was to preserve the building's history and heritage while delivering a contemporary design inspired by the beauty of the surrounding Swiss landscapes.
5. Following a two-year closure, **Mii amo**, a destination spa in Sedona, Arizona, announced its plans to reopen on February 2 and revealed details of its \$40 million renovation and expansion. The expansion includes a new light-filled movement and fitness wing, a signature restaurant, dedicated consultation wing with a spectacular view of Boynton Canyon and a private suite of spaces exclusively for Journey guests, in addition to new treatment rooms, guest rooms and suites. Mii amo's original architect, Gluckman Tang, was engaged to expand and enhance its original design.



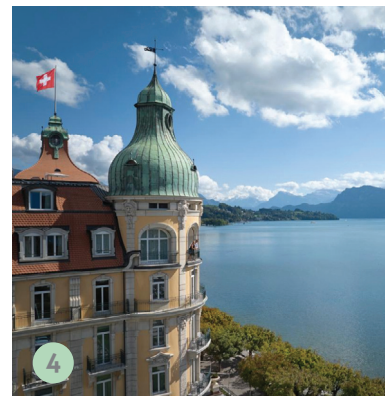
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New Offerings

1. Last September, **Green II Gold** presented a workshop for spa professionals at the **ECOFIBRE** headquarters in Georgetown, Kentucky, in collaboration with Lightstim to discuss the benefits of CBD in skin care combined with LED light therapy. Not only did the techniques and products demonstrated create an immediate improvement in the appearance of the skin, but the client's overall wellness also improved. The improvement was evaluated and quantified in real time by Dr. Codrin Bloσιu using FDA-approved technology to measure, among other areas, neurological stress resistance before and after the treatment.
2. **Noel Asmar Uniforms** marked its 20th anniversary with the launch of **Asmar Scrubs**—a new collection of “made for the way you move” eco-friendly uniforms designed to serve the growing healthcare and medical spa market. “We elevated spa uniforms 20 years ago and since that time we’ve seen an evolution in the spa and wellness industry. We identified a shift as more medical focused treatments are being offered and new approaches to wellness and self-care are emerging,” says founder and CEO Noel Asmar.
3. **Hydrothermal spa and wellness specialist Design for Leisure (DFL)** has unveiled a new Event Sauna Services program in a bid to better accommodate the growing demand for European-style communal, social sauna experiences in the U.S. and U.K. Event saunas are large saunas that typically accommodate at least 10 people, but the largest in the world hosts up to 300. In addition to housing more people than a typical sauna cabin, they also provide enough space for sauna masters to perform Aufguss rituals or lead group classes, like meditation or breathwork.
4. **Kohler Waters Spa** released the **Stillness Bath** treatment as the latest addition to its offering of luxury spa experiences and innovative bathing technologies. Available exclusively at Kohler Waters Spa at Destination Kohler, the treatment stimulates a sanctuary-like bathing experience for self-care and wellbeing. The deep soak of the Stillness Bath is inspired by traditional Japanese forest bathing practices and promotes a natural experience designed to enhance the senses, quiet the mind and provide full relaxation.
5. **Burke Williams** launched its newest treatment offering, the **Tranquility Massage**, which features massage therapy integrated with the healing effects of sound to create a calming experience. Designed to bring the body and mind into a state of deep relaxation, it utilizes singing bowls hand-crafted by Nepalese artisans who add a personalized touch to each bowl, with the bowl sets tuned in harmony with one another.



Partnerships

1. **Global spa development firm TLEE Spas + Wellness teamed up with Auberge Resorts Collection to reveal a new 12,000-square-foot spa** at wellness destination resort Stanly Ranch. Design plans for the destination took inspiration from its scenic location in the heart of California's wine country. "It's rooted in nature and is inherently social in its sensibility, encouraging meaningful connections, relaxation and recovery within the context of pleasure and celebration," said Tracy Lee, president and founder of TLEE Spas.
2. **STRATA Integrated Wellness at Garden of the Gods Resort & Club in Colorado has partnered with licensed psychologist Dr. Angie Dunn of Cottonwood Creek Wellness Center.** "Dr. Dunn's expertise in behavioral health will help us to expand our service options, and we are thrilled to have her join our team in-house," says Dr. Michael J. Barber, medical director at STRATA Integrated Wellness Spa. "At STRATA, we focus on the whole person and Dr. Dunn's work will be transformative for her patients."
3. **HydraFacial announced the release of its HydraFacial x JLo Beauty Booster to providers nationwide as a customized treatment addition for any HydraFacial.** This is the company's first celebrity partnership, and presales for the highly anticipated booster sold out on the first day. Inspired by JLo Beauty's "That JLo Glow" retail serum, the professional booster will deliver Jennifer Lopez's iconic glowy skin care to consumers through HydraFacial's handpiece and Vortex-Fusion technology.
4. **Soothe and Woodhouse Spas have teamed up to provide additional professional staff to Woodhouse franchise locations.** Woodhouse Spas' 75-plus locations across 22 states will now be able to offer available shifts to licensed massage, esthetician, cosmetology and nail tech providers via the Soothe platform. "We're excited to be partnering with Woodhouse Spas to help them meet their high demand and help fill in the gaps in the labor market," said Soothe CEO John Ellis.
5. **Spa, beauty, wellness and medical equipment supplier Gharieni Group has completed the acquisition of established Dutch beauty equipment manufacturer Bentlon.** "The acquisition of Bentlon is a logical step toward more diversity in our product portfolio," says Sammy Gharieni, CEO and founder of Gharieni Group. "The combination of Bentlon's high-end products infused with Gharieni Group's innovative spirit means we'll see some exciting new developments."



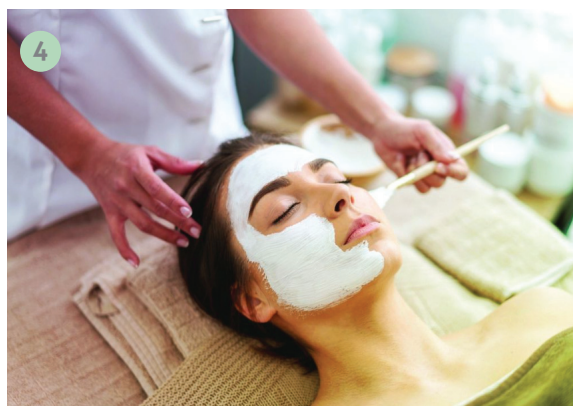
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ISPA FOUNDATION

TOP 5 WAYS TO SUPPORT THE ISPA FOUNDATION

YOU ALREADY KNOW the ISPA Foundation's mission is to improve and enhance the value of the spa experience. As the leading source of education and research about spa industry topics, the ISPA Foundation performs work crucial to advancing spa culture to a broader audience.

Most ISPA members know what the Foundation accomplishes but may not be aware of opportunities to be part of our important efforts.

Here are five actions you can take in 2023 to help lead the spa industry and ensure the Foundation is able to continue its strong mission:

- 1. VOLUNTEER YOUR KNOWLEDGE** The ISPA Foundation supports education and research—and no one is a better source than the ISPA membership. Your depth of experience and knowledge and your unique perspectives are important to accomplishing our mission.
- 2. CHECK OFF A RENEWAL CONTRIBUTION** It's as easy as a checkmark. When you renew your ISPA membership, make sure the ISPA Foundation box is checked. A small but powerful \$25 contribution will be directed to the Foundation.
- 3. PARTICIPATE IN FOUNDATION EVENTS** Any event has two success measurements: Did it achieve its goals, and how many people took part? Whether you can devote time to planning and organizing events or you just make sure to show up and show support, your time is a significant contribution.
- 4. DONATE TO OUR FUNDS** The easiest way to make a quick impact is to back the Foundation with a monetary gift. Because the ISPA Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization, contributions made to it may even have tax advantages. A "Donate Here" button on the ISPA Foundation web page makes giving easy.
- 5. BE AN AUCTION SUPERSTAR** Every year, fundraising auctions at the Conference and online during the holidays are a primary source of the Foundation's operating income. You can support every auction multiple times: Donate an item to be auctioned; bid on your favorite offerings; and share the link to virtual auctions with your friends and loved ones to increase our reach.

A WELL-FUNDED FOUNDATION is enabled to pursue workforce and consumer initiatives, global research, scholarship awards, and many more worthwhile goals. With your ongoing support, 2023 can be our best year yet. Contact us at Foundation@ispastaff.com to discuss how you plan to support the Foundation in the new year.



—FRANK PITSIKALIS, ISPA FOUNDATION CHAIR



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Good news about the Conference auction

ONE FINAL NOTE: We are so pleased to share the ISPA Foundation Live Auction will return to the Expo floor at the 2023 ISPA Conference in Las Vegas. This will make it even easier to access and will allow exhibitors and attendees to join in on the fun.

DO YOU EVER WONDER

how your peers would handle a situation? Maybe you're curious what other leaders in the spa industry have to say on a certain subject. In *Sound Off*, we ask ISPA members from differing backgrounds, countries and companies the same question and see how their answers compare.



VALAURIE LEE
The Wellness Spot
Founder, CEO

One innovation shift is in adapting a holistic approach to wellness and integrating services with a consideration toward the metaphysical, spiritual and community-based facets. We are even integrating counseling services as a part of our service offerings here at The Wellness Spot. Another shift is in utilizing technology and data analytics not only to create an enhanced experience for spa-goers, but also to continuously improve on the services and amenities offered. Technology touches from our infrared sauna to using our spa software to gauge customer utilization are examples of how we are working to stay relevant and preferred as a spa.



SABRINA WRIGHT
Cambium Spa at Schweitzer
Wellness & Spa Manager

A trend in fitness for warm up and recovery services can be an opportunity for spas to incorporate. For example, the new Cambium Spa at Schweitzer has two community areas where guests can share services like reflexology and meditation with family members or friends. Our focus is on serving guests with on-demand express services to rev them up for a day on the mountain, services to aid in a swift recovery from an active day and, of course, experiences inviting guests to reconnect and rejuvenate with HaloIR saunas, sound loungers and more.



TAMMY PAHEL
Carillon Miami Wellmess Resort
VP of Spa & Wellness
Operations

As interest in the innovation of touchless wellness technologies continues to grow, our residents, members and locals have come up with their own ways to tap into experiences for their personal wellness needs, including coupling touchless with traditional spa services. Touchless wellness technologies will never replace massages, body treatments and/or facials, but spas should keep a sharp eye on technology developments that can enhance their spa offerings. While spas struggle with the shortage of therapists, touchless wellness experiences can assist with a new revenue stream not dependent on a provider.



PATRICIA SANTOS WILSON
Indian Springs Resort
Spa Director

Companies are getting adjusted to hybrid work, to four-day work weeks, and through all that we are striving for happiness and fulfillment. We have experienced an increase of spa-goers during the work week as some companies have adjusted and are more flexible with work time since the pandemic. As other industries are getting their work schedule adjusted to the new model of life, the spa world is ready to live 2023 as if every day were the weekend. We are happy to guide people through this new phase of life. ■

“What innovations have you seen in other service industries that would resonate with spa-goers in 2023?”

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THIS MONTH WE ASKED:

“What is one personal goal you have for 2023?”

Lynne McNeas • President

lynne.mcneas@ispastaff.com • 1.859.226.4260

“We’ve made a commitment since last summer to participate in a 5K run a month and so far we haven’t missed!”

Crystal Ducker • Vice President

crystal.ducker@ispastaff.com • 1.859.226.4427

“Do more of what I love and break free of cyclical routines. New life adventures and experiences are at the top of my 2023 priority list!”

Emily Eckler • Expo & Fulfillment Manager

emily.eckler@ispastaff.com • 1.859.687.7013

“I want to focus on living in the moment and not be too distracted or caught up in what is yet to come.”

Amy Finder • Graphic Designer

amy.finder@ispastaff.com • 1.859.963.1877

“I turn 50 in September—my gift to myself for 2023 is to improve my fitness level so I can feel healthier and more confident as I stroll into my half-century of life.”

Scot T. Gillies • Executive Editor

scot.gillies@ispastaff.com • 1.859.226.4372

“Getting to know a newborn horse! My wife and I have a favorite mare due with her first foal this spring and we plan lots of time for early training and handling.”

Nelson Lane • Marketing Manager

nelson.lane@ispastaff.com • 1.859.551.3906

“In 2022, I had a goal to hit the gym 10 times a month. I’ve achieved that and will be raising that to 12 times a month in 2023.”

Stacie McWilliams • Membership Manager

stacie.wallace@ispastaff.com • 1.859.226.4292

“I want to spend more time reading in 2023. Reading has never been a hobby of mine, but I’d like to finish at least two or three books this year. It would also help lower my screen time.”

Jessica Roberts • Marketing Specialist

jessica.roberts@ispastaff.com • 1.859.425.5072

“I want to amp up my cooking skills. I’ve always loved to cook, but I’m ready to start learning new skills and techniques.”

Samantha Smith • Project Manager

samantha.smith@ispastaff.com • 1.859.219.3619

“I have a big birthday this year, so my goal is to get myself READY because the best is yet to come!”

Marja Walker • Graphic Designer

marja.walker@ispastaff.com • 1.520.891.3439

“Since I rescued a little pup last year, I’ve been walking much more—her energy is endless. She wants to go-go-go. My goal is to keep up with her. That means getting more fit and faster. I’m getting there, one step at a time.”

Kirsten Wright • Member Experience Specialist

kirsten.wright@ispastaff.com • 1.859.226.4207

“One goal I have for 2023 is to complete a half-marathon!”

VISION

To be the leader in promoting and enhancing the well-being of the spa industry and the people it serves.

MISSION

ISPA advances the spa industry by providing invaluable educational and networking opportunities, promoting the value of the spa experience and speaking as the authoritative voice to foster professionalism and growth.

ENDnotes

NOT SURE HOW ALL MY FRIENDS continue to write such poetic blogs and record podcasts. It's a lot of work to keep it fresh and interesting. Personally, I struggle every time an *End Notes* is due!

This really resonated with me as we reflect back on the last few years and optimistically turn our sights to the coming year. **There is so much we take for granted every day but—truly—aren't we blessed!**

Happy 2023....

*At the
end of the day,
what really matters
is your
loved ones are well,
you've
done your best
and you're
thankful
for all you have.*

— AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Lynne

—LYNNE MCNEES, ISPA PRESIDENT



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