



The Americas: United States

Note: We are a hospitality management recruiting firm. Our customers are hotels, resorts, destination spas, resort spas, hotel spas, and day spas in need of management staff. We have noticed several trends this year:

- Some of our U.S. clients are expanding overseas and have asked us to conduct searches for spas in France, China, The Maldives, and the Caribbean. Most of these clients sought a spa operations professional who already had worked outside of the U.S. in a non-consulting role.
- Although spa operations directors/managers remain the most sought-after spa professionals, the demand for experienced spa marketers emerged as a strong second—Chief Marketing Officer, VP of Marketing & E-Commerce or Director of Marketing.
- Overall, we observed more movement among spa professionals than in the previous few years. During the past several years, professionals in secure positions were reluctant to move to a new property or firm, fearing that the weak global economy would lead to layoffs, and that the most-recently hired person was the most vulnerable. This led in turn to pent-up desire for career advancement and variety.
- In part as a consequence, attractive professional openings now attract unusually large numbers of qualified applicants, leading to fierce competition. Employers have the luxury of interviewing large numbers of qualified candidates. They tended to dismiss spa consultants or unemployed candidates in favor of professionals with day-to-day operational and financial responsibilities.
- We know many U.S. spa professionals who seek to expand their careers outside the U.S., but offshore firms tend to shy away from them, not wanting to risk hiring someone whose experience is limited to the U.S. market. Conversely, non-U.S. citizens wishing to obtain positions in the US face the increasingly steep obstacles associated with gaining permission to work in the U.S., and U.S. employers tend to seek candidates with experience in U.S. markets and U.S. employment laws.
- Hospitality companies seeking new managers—whether in operations or in sales/marketing—are conducting longer, more thorough searches in what they perceive as a buyers' market. They utilize Skype interviews, background and credit checks, more comprehensive reference checking, more in-person interviews, language proficiency tests, and homework assignments. We see an up-tick in demand, but a greater up-tick in high-quality candidates pursuing opportunities.
- As the overall level of management competency continues to increase in a world of greater financial pressures, we observe consolidation of positions at all levels. The search for a Spa Director morphs into a search for a Director of Spa & Recreation or Leisure Operations. The positions of Senior VP of Spa Operations and VP of Spa Operations combine into one position.

- Anecdotally we observe that growth at the luxury end of the spa business seems to continue at a steady, but slow, rate.
- Meanwhile, we observe new, steep growth at the other end of the market. For example, a Massage Envy franchise just opened in our hometown.
- Perhaps it is premature to predict, but it would not surprise us to witness a long-term trend towards the mass market, as has happened over the past decades in the hospitality and travel industries.

SUBMITTED BY:

Lori Hutchinson
Founder / Co-Owner
Hutchinson Consulting
United States



lori@hutchinsonconsulting.com
www.hutchinsonconsulting.com