

Career Advice

Anna Bjurstam

**VP of Spas
Six Senses Spas**



I often meet enthusiastic staff, such as therapists, receptionists and head therapists/receptionists who say they want to be spa managers within two to three years time. I then ask them, what do they want to accomplish within these two to three years and the general answer is "more experience and understanding". "That is great", I say, "This means that you already have knowledge on sales & marketing, finance, leadership, etc?" Then they look embarrassed and say "no, not really". Me: "Then you need to start planning for when you will acquire the skills needed to do the job you are envisioning". A strategic action plan is key. Knowing what you do not know yet and how to get that knowledge and experience is important. Plan how to get it. Time is not enough for a promotion.

Elena Bogacheva

**CEO, Spa Priori
President, Spa & Wellness International Council**



No matter what the starting point of your career path in spa and wellness industry was or will be, be always open to all learning opportunities. Our industry is the one that never ceases to develop, introducing more and more innovations. Read business publications, listen to industry leaders, attend professional events and network with colleagues from all over the world. Invest in your professional knowledge as much as you can afford. If you want to grow professionally, you should constantly look for new resources and create your own ones.

Angela Cortright

**Principal
Spa Gregories**



Create your own personal 'board of directors'. These could be industry associates, community leaders, coworkers who you respect, relatives, etc. You would be surprised how honored people are that you would ask. Choose people who have the wisdom to help you make decisions along the way of your career path, as well as to be a sounding board for critical business decisions. Have clear understandings regarding what you ask of them and confidentiality. Touch base with them on a regular basis to let them know how you are doing and to gain the benefit of their wisdom and perspective on issues you are having. You will find comfort in the perspective of your board as they help you along your way.

Career Advice



Aldina Duarte Ramos
Senior Brand Manager
Sofitel Luxury Hotels

- Understand cost control when it comes to, example:
 - in-house treatments,
 - partner brands treatments,
 - spa operations (cleaning, linen, drinks),
 - spa marketing tools (prints)
- Define key KPI's.
- Understand your market revenue drivers according to a local market research and benchmark.
- Have your mind free for successful management.
- Lead by example and innovate, don't be shy. If you fail, you will learn from it. If you win you will learn from it!



Elaine Fenard
Managing Partner
Spa Strategies

The three e's, education, experience and escape are keys to success. Look for companies that provide training and programs that allow you to educate yourself. Jump in and get the experience, learn from everyone around you. Escape on a regular basis; only by detaching occasionally do we find balance and inspiration.

Don't limit yourself. All too often we limit ourselves because of a perceived conception that this and only this is the right path. Spa Director can lead to many roads.

Reevaluate at every decision point in your life; make sure your life balance is what you want.



Andrew Gibson
Group Director of Spa
Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group

The spa and wellness industry offers the opportunity to combine your passion for helping people whilst developing every aspect of managing a business. Spa and wellness are in the service industry which is challenging, demands full commitment and a positive mind, but the rewards are fulfilling when your contribution makes someone else feel better. Anyone working in the spa, medical or wellness arena should understand the art of hospitality. Master this and your career will shine anywhere.

I would advise any person considering this career to take every opportunity to learn business management; to try to look at things from a variety of perspectives and to be positive in attitude.

Career Advice



Nancy Griffin
Founder
Contento Marketing

- Show up first in service - find a way to add value to the spa industry
- Attend industry conferences and networking events
- Gain an understanding of how spa treatments work on the body
- Think outside of the box when it comes to the delivery of spa services - the best ideas are yet to come
- Work for a reputable spa for at least a year before you even consider operating your own spa
- If you don't love people, find another industry
- Let your genuine passion for "all things spa" shine through, and doors will open!



Lori Hutchinson
Founder & Co-Owner
Hutchinson Consulting
Our Spa Community

- Know yourself really well. Learn from your successes and failures. Match the job to your personality. Do not attempt to proceed into a career step that doesn't match your strengths or desires.
 - Be careful about career moves and strive to work for a company that matches your ethics, beliefs, and passion. When you make a career move, make the *right* one, and do not make the mistake of jumping from job to job without a goal.
 - Measure your work with objective indicators (\$, #, %) and be able to explain your accomplishments in detail.
 - Strive every single day to be your very best self and improve constantly through commitment to lifelong learning.
 - Spend time with people whose opinion you value (mentors!) and solicit their advice about your career: next steps and ultimate goal.
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Career Advice

Kim Matheson Shedrick

President

Natural Resources Spa Consulting



Get to work: Get in the game and maximize your exposure and understanding by accepting a position, even if it's an entry level role. For example, Spa Receptionist is an excellent opportunity to understand all components of spa. Look for best practices.

Network relentlessly: have a business card to hand other professionals, utilize social media, attend conferences and push yourself beyond your comfort zone. Extend yourself to Spa professionals, technicians, vendors, software, independents and brands; all have something to offer.

Look to other industries for their best practices: consider what can spas learn from airlines' ability to fill a plane 100%; or from Apple stores that produce \$4,000 retail a square foot?

Be aware of how **being over-educated in a subject can lead to incapacity** to make changes. Keep fresh eyes wide open for new opportunities; blue sky.

Believe in yourself, in others and in the power of a life well lived. Pursuing a career in the Spa and Well-being industry is a very worthwhile endeavor for yourself and others.

Jeremy McCarthy

Director, Global Spa Development and Operations
Starwood Hotels and Resorts



These are some strategies that helped me to learn and grow throughout my career:

- Focus on the positive: Celebrate success as much as you focus on fixing problems. Recognize strengths as much as you develop weaknesses. Prioritize growing revenues over cutting costs.
 - Every spa, every employee, and every customer is different. Don't assume that what worked in the past will work in the future. Challenge your own ideas and create a culture where your team can challenge your ideas also.
 - Spend as much time as you can listening and learning. Every person that you work for or with has something to teach you (even if you might not like them, or the lesson they have for you.) Find out what that is and don't miss out on learning it!
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Career Advice

Geeta Morar

**CEO
SVA Spas**



With more and more people living harried lifestyles, the need to revive and prevent various diseases which are the repercussions of stress and increasingly globalized landscape, the need for alternative therapies like mind and body work are becoming increasingly popular. In fact the industry cannot meet the demand.

So where does the spa and wellness industry face the biggest challenge?

Well trained and certified spa directors/ managers, therapists, and estheticians are all sparse by the numbers. Healing is an art, and therefore creativity is a very important aspect of wellness in general. You will feel the transformation within yourself and will experience great satisfaction in helping your guests relax and revive.

You can choose to be trained as an esthetician or a registered massage therapist, or opt to go into management and spa operations. Whatever you choose, the careers are all promising and well paying and allow you the opportunity to be an entrepreneur as well. But most of all you have the privilege to heal people.



Deborah Smith, MBA, CMC

Principal, Smith Club & Spa Specialists

Based on my experience, it has really helped to have had three outstanding bosses who were immensely supportive of my professional development, and very tolerant of my mistakes. It is very difficult to reach one's potential if not encouraged by others who care about you as a person, and your future. That is called "mentorship."

The biggest discouragement to career development can be working in a dysfunctional, emotionally-toxic job setting. Like the message you get on your computer when you open a software program that can't be trusted: "*Get me out of here!*"



Ana Taffin d'Heursel

**Global Human Resources Manager
Six Senses Spas**

Be yourself. Follow your dreams and your passion. There will always be challenges in your career at whatever stage you will be. How you will face them and react to them is what will make the difference and what will make it all happen.
