



Calling all Consultants: What Can We Accomplish Together that We can Not Accomplish Alone?

Breakout Discussion Forum

Facilitator

Jared Weiner, Executive Vice President & Chief Strategy Officer, The Future Hunters, U.S.

Conversation Leader

Lisa Starr, Community Ambassador, Booker Software; Chair, GWI Consulting Initiative, U.S.

Conversation Participants

Current spa and wellness consultants (across all sub-categories). Because it was an open conversation, the ideas below will be presented generally and without attribution to specific participants.

Overview:

This session was structured as an open dialogue among spa consultants. It was the first of its kind session at GWS, and was designed to provide an opportunity for attendees to:

1. Discuss the GWI Consulting Initiative (and accompanying digital portal)
2. Share any other issues that they want to discuss among their peers

Lisa opened up by giving an overview of the GWI (Global Wellness Institute) consulting best practices initiative. She explained the general goals of the initiative, and then walked everyone through a live demo of the in-development site. The Consulting Best Practices Initiative, according to the site itself, aims to fulfill the following objectives:

- Clarify the role of consultants in a development project or ongoing spa-related business
- Help individuals and businesses to evaluate when a consultant would benefit them, and provide guidelines on the selection process
- Outline the various areas of expertise of spa and leisure consultants
- Serve as a global voice for spa consulting professionals, creating common best practices and ethics guidelines
- Mentor spa professionals who desire to become consultants

In general, the conversation was cooperative in spirit. While many consultants in the room (and beyond) compete with one another, there seemed to be a consensus that the spa consulting community can benefit from shared resources that not only outline best practices, but also help spa consultants – across various niches – secure more referral business.

After introducing the platform, Lisa opened up the discussion to observations and suggestions from the group. They included:

Challenges:

- Vetting: There needs to be an effective vetting process to distinguish between full-time consultants and “consultants” who are simply in-between other jobs. How do we accomplish that?
- Verification: How can we verify that consultants are being truthful about their areas of expertise? The platform should obviously link to each respective consultant’s website. But should there also be a requirement for references/testimonials? And how can we verify that consultants are being truthful about the geographies in which they complete projects?

Suggestions:

- Segmentation: There needs to be further segmentation between different types of consultants.
- Filtering: The utility of the platform will be considerably aided by more refined filtering options. For example, it would be great if someone searching for spa consultants could filter across multiple categories (e.g., geographies worked, area/s of expertise, length of time as a consultant, etc.).

Opportunities:

- Community: There’s an opportunity to create a collaborative environment among and between consultants. Perhaps the GWI consulting initiative can become a “community” for spa consultants that doesn’t exist anywhere else today.
- The Ultimate Resource: How do we make something like this “the” resource for people looking to hire spa consultants (in other words, so they do not have to go to the GWI platform proactively)? Where else can it eventually be linked and indexed?

Fast Forward: What This Will Mean in the Future?

The future will increasingly be about collaboration – including within an industry. While many consultants compete with each other, there’s a great opportunity to create a stronger overall spa consultant ecosystem with a platform like this. This initiative has the ability to raise awareness and visibility for spa consultants, collectively – a win all the way around.

Additionally, information has become a commodity, but many people can no longer trust the information they get online. Nor is it always intuitive where to go for certain types of information. A *curated* one-stop shop for anyone looking to hire a spa

consultant will be important in a future when two things that matter most to people are: time and trust. This platform has the potential, over time, to be the gold standard in the industry – the spa equivalent of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval for consultants of every specialty.

Submitted by:

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