



THE AMERICAS: BRAZIL

What are the most significant global issues facing us today?

A global issue that faces us today is how to do more with less. Natural resources are not going to be available long term. How do we use them in our favor, so that our grandchildren are able to enjoy the same pleasure as ours?

In the spa industry, one of our important pillars is the water resource. The issue is how to use and preserve it. Taking care of used water is important and basic when it comes to our business, but the real problem lies in a deeper matter. How will the world preserve our rivers, lakes, seas and, especially, our groundwater? We need industries and farms, but how do we minimize the effects of pesticides and pollution in the world's water? Maximize organic production, is it feasible? Yes, but not for an overeating lifestyle.

With that, we have another global issue that is affecting us, obesity. Changing lifestyle is necessary and vital for a long and healthy existence. If we analyze worldwide, the communities that have a healthy longevity have habits in common: healthier food (less of it) and exercise. Unfortunately, in our modern world the trend is exactly the opposite: unhealthy food and a sedentary lifestyle. How we expand our health knowledge to the population is an issue that needs to be considered.

What do you see as the main innovations happening around the world, those which are game changing and/or disruptive?

Some innovations changed the world's culture and lifestyle, like the internet, 3G cell phones and social networking. It narrowed down distances and democratized information and knowledge. Within minutes, hours and days, trends and information can be spread around the world. This innovation is a wonderful tool for communication and knowledge, but causes a lack of balance. Today the invasion of technology in our daily activities and the growth of desirable gadgets make us hostages to them. We communicate through social networking instead of personal contact; we panic when we need to turn our cell phone off; we become hostages to information being always available. Yes, the agility that this innovation brought us can be a benefactor or a villain. How we choose to balance it will decide its outcome.

Looking to the world's resources, an innovation that is a game changer is clean energy. There are many solutions and technologies that can help to preserve our world. It is important that each person and company analyze the best solutions so that we preserve a cleaner and healthier world.

What do you see as the main innovations in the spa/wellness industry (existing and future)?

The main innovation in the spa and wellness industry is the quality and agility of diagnostics. Over the years, many different kinds of exams have been given to us in order to know exactly what our customers have and need. The combination of these exams with a good and deep interaction with a doctor, nutritionist, physiotherapist or personal trainer (depending on what the problem is) can enhance the results. Knowing if the customer has gluten intolerance, hormone deficiency or even fragile bone structure can help create a good, personalized program for each customer.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities/challenges for the global spa and wellness industry?

Looking at the global scenario through a BRICS country analysis, we have an excellent opportunity to offer health solutions for burnout symptoms. The work pressure and accelerated rhythm is enormous and it requires extreme energy from our executives. Burnout is the modern illness and how to reenergize and increase productivity, with health, is the answer.

Another opportunity is to devolve the human essence to the human being. The human race lost its essence due to the velocity of the modern world, agility in the information, overstated work pressure, exaggerated consume desire, deflation of inner purpose, disconnection with nature and loss of spirituality. This essence needs to be cultivated and resuscitated in order to bring peace, joy and health into our life. The spa and wellness industry has the knowledge and the right products to offer. It's an opportunity and an obligation to deliver a service that takes care of the human as a whole: body, mind and spirit.

As for the challenges, the main issue is how to be attractive with the growing tourism destination variety. Traveling is getting easier and cheaper, but the customer has to decide what kind of vacation; health and wellness trips are not always priority and can be exchanged for a gastronomic or buying trip. The challenge is to prove the importance of health and wellness tourism above any other. It's not a matter of choosing, the ideal world is having both trips in one year.

What are some practical ways for businesses to create a climate for creativity and innovation?

Form small and multidisciplinary groups in order to generate a propitious moment to exchange different point of views. In this focus group, the ability of thinking outside of the box is the challenge. See an idea with the knowledge of another specialist.

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