

ASIA: ISRAEL

1. What is currently making news in your country when it comes to wellness or wellbeing?

Wellness is quite a new term in Israel.

Wellness in Israel does exist in a practical way.

One can find gyms and spas, medical and health centers, medical tourism, outdoor activities, beauty clinics and more; yet it is very symbolic that we still don't have a common word in Hebrew for Wellness and we use the English term.

However, I can say that the awareness to the wellness and wellbeing term is rising and the industry in general is developing in several sectors.

For example, in a few months, the first wellness conference will be held in Tel Aviv.

2. Please provide one sentence that describes what you think are important developments in your country for each of the following:

Spas: The Spa industry includes day Spas, Spa hotels, medical spas and mineral baths (such as the famous Dead Sea). Due to the increase of quality of life, so has the quality and variety in the spa industry. However, I think there is still room for development in the management and service areas.

(Israel is 3rd in rank in number of spas and spa revenues in the Middle East North Africa region in 2013.)

Wellness Tourism: Medical tourism - Israel has become a center for people seeking specialized qualitative treatment. Beyond that, Israel is also becoming a wellness tourism hub with several wellness hotels in development. Israel's history, the holy sites and the dead sea, certainly help in this sense with attracting the tourists.

(Israel is ranked 3rd both in the number of trips and in expenditure in the tourism market in the Middle East North Africa region in 2013.)

Wellness Living Communities/Real Estate: Certainly on the rise. This sector is still in its roots but gaining awareness and is being developed. You can already see significant marketing campaigns for wellness communities especially in the Tel Aviv metropolitan and the first real estate wellness projects.

Beauty: This market is developed. Israel offers a variety of modern, technological and sophisticated services and skilled personnel.

Fitness: There are about 1200 gyms and clubs – from local neighborhood clubs to big international sophisticated chains. The estimated number of people training in clubs is 10% of the population and growing. According to a survey conducted by the Israeli ministry of health in 2013, about 37% of Israelis reported doing physical activity every day or almost every day. The market is quite developed and modern. I think that one of the future trends is opening low cost gyms that would attract more members in the near future. Another trend is adopting a more wellness holistic view into the existing clubs.

Nutrition: Similar to the beauty market, it is a developed market. One of the developments is certainly recognizing the importance of keeping a balanced diet from early age and the increase of awareness and practical steps in schools and public institutions all over the country. Another development is the increase of vegan and vegetarian awareness, and therefore, an increase of services provided for this sector such as specific vegan restaurants and offering healthier vegan choices in non-vegan restaurants and coffee shops.

3. How would you describe the state of workplace wellness in your country?

I have no doubt that this sector is in its early stages. There are a few companies that have in house wellness programs. However, there aren't wellness's known providers. The Israeli corporate market is extremely developed. Israel is known worldwide as a "Start-up Nation". With more than 3,000 high-tech companies and start-ups, Israel has the highest concentration of hi-tech companies in the world (apart from the Silicon Valley). Hence, I have no doubt this sector will develop soon and the gap between the existing need in Israel and the wide international knowledge and experience will close.

4. What has been the general attitude about investing in spa/wellness in your country in 2015? Specific examples?

The general attitude is very positive.

One development is investing in wellness hotels and modern spas that would also serve the community as a wellness center. There are a few super modern hotels are being designed

Another development is the increase of wellness in the public sector and insurance companies: better nutrition in public institutions, more wellness programs and increase of awareness in those sectors.

Also, more conferences and forums are being held in the wellness and spa sectors that would spread the wellness spirit.

5. Whose responsibility is it to create a well world?

No doubt, it is the responsibility of each and every one of us. Especially ours as the ambassadors' of the wellness industry. We have the power to influence the communities, the businesses, the governments etc.

I certainly connect to the phrase "Think globally, act locally" and that is what we should do.

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